Gel.
33

PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

THE NEW RADICALISM: ROUND IV
Norm Fruchter, Tom Hayden,
Sargent Shriver

MURIEL SPARK	Scenes from a play
ROBERT MUSIL	Grigia (a story)
SUSAN SONTAG	Yugoslav Report
LESLIE A. FIEDLER	Americans Abroad
ERIC BENTLEY	The Great Wall
RICHARD KLUGER	Sex and Supersex
LIONEL ABEL and STUART HAMPSHIRE	Situating Sartre

and Peter Brooks, Reuben A. Brower, Morris Dickstein, Stephen Donadio, A. D. Hope, Stephen Koch, Kenneth S. Lynn, and Ben B. Seligman

1

WINTER
1966

$1.25
7/6

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COLUMBIA COLUMBIA

THOREAU AS WORLD TRAVELER

By JOHN A. CHRISTIE

"Live at home like a traveler," Thoreau advised a friend. This simple statement by a writer renowned for immortalizing a small New England town gives us a new view of Thoreau—the voyager at home. He devoured travel literature and studded his writings with references to popular travel books. Professor Christie has tracked Thoreau to his sources and has here recreated the global routes and discoveries that so delighted him. $8.75

HARDY OF WESSEX

Second Edition

By CARL J. WEBER

Now thoroughly revised and brought up-to-date, this superb portrait of Thomas Hardy provides the reader with both analysis and interpretation of the life and works of the famous Victorian novelist and poet. "Necessary to any thorough reading of Hardy."—*Times Literary Supplement.* "The best recent study."—MAXWELL GEISMAR, *The Nation.* $8.50

COLUMBIA ESSAYS ON MODERN WRITERS

Edited by WILLIAM YORK TINDALL

A series of critical studies of writers in the European tradition—each written by a well-known scholar and critic. These four essays have just been added to the series: ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET by Bruce Morissette; JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE by Denis Johnston; LOUIS FERDINAND CELINE by David Hayman; and RAYMOND QUENEAU by Jacques Guicharnaud. *each* $0.65

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
2960 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10027

COLUMBIA COLUMBIA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books by the distinguished essayist and critic

William Righter

LOGIC AND CRITICISM

In this volume (recommended by the *Times Literary Supplement* in "Books of the 60's U.S.A."), Mr. Righter examines the problems of criticism, the character of critical language and argument, the problem of judgement, and the relevance or irrelevance of moral criteria. "The best attempt I know to sort out the chaos in the language of literary criticism and to show what kind of order, if any, it is capable of."—*Graham Hough.* $4.95

THE RHETORICAL HERO

An Essay on the Aesthetics of André Malraux

This is the first study "in depth" of the work of Malraux—an evaluation of his works on the psychology of art, in relation to his early novels and his recent political activity in the De Gaulle government. "An admirable piece of writing, concise, closely reasoned, astringent and serviceably eloquent."—*George Woodcock.* $3.95

Now at your bookstore

CHILMARK PRESS

Distributed by Random House

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"In the field of international social psychology, THE PATTERN OF HUMAN CONCERNS is clearly a work of first magnitude."
—PROFESSOR GORDON ALLPORT, Harvard University

The Pattern of Human Concerns

by HADLEY CANTRIL

Using a brilliantly original technique of psychological exploration, this simply stated book proposes a new way of looking at mankind's social structure. Employing what they term the Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, Dr. Cantril and his associates reveal how people everywhere feel about their lives and nations, their pasts, presents, and futures.

Their study embraces nearly a third of all the people on earth—citizens of both developed and developing countries, of democracies, of dictatorships—a coverage of fourteen nations, five continents, and many islands, including—importantly—Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Dr. Cantril's fresh method of approach shows how it is possible to avoid many errors in the exercise of national policy, and to embark on policies which offer a likelihood of success.

Dr. Cantril has been an adviser to four of the last five United States administrations. His report deals with the real world. Its implications embrace politics, government, history, social science, economics, cultural anthropology, and a dozen other fields.

Charts, diagrams, 450 pages, $10.00

This volume is one of a group of major works published in celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of Rutgers, The State University.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS, New Brunswick, New Jersey

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Cave and the Mountain

A STUDY OF E. M. FORSTER

Wilfred Stone. "This book is the most important to appear on E. M. Forster since Lionel Trilling acclaimed him as a major novelist twenty years ago."—*Noel Annan.* Part I sets forth Forster's cultural, historical, intellectual, and personal background; Part II examines his writings in detail, with special emphasis on the novels. Thirty-two pages of photographs, many never before published. $8.95

Kafū the Scribbler

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF NAGAI KAFU (1879-1959)

Edward Seidensticker. This is the first full-length study of a modern Japanese writer to appear in any Western language. Part I is a biography with background information and critical comments on Kafū's works. Part II consists of translations, by the author, of six of Kafū's best stories and sketches, and several long excerpts from his novels. Illustrated. $8.50

Shakespeare: The Last Phase

Derek Traversi. A reissue. "An interesting and absorbing study of *Pericles, The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline,* and *The Tempest.* . . . The analysis of the forces absorbing Shakespeare in this last phase is skillfully and thoroughly done."—*Theatre Arts.* "One of the ablest . . . of the fashionable group of critics who practice 'symbolic' criticism."—*Manchester Guardian* $6.00

NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK

The Complete Essays of Montaigne

Translated by Donald M. Frame. "A faithful translation is rare; a translation which preserves intact the original text is very rare; a perfect translation of Montaigne appears impossible. Yet Donald Frame has realized this feat. One does not seem to be reading a translation, so smooth and easy is the style."—André Maurois, *The N. Y. Times Book Review* Cloth: $7.50, Paper: $3.50

Order from your bookstore, please

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PR PARTISAN REVIEW

EDITORIAL BOARD: William Phillips
Philip Rahv, Richard Poirier
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Steven Marcus

ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR:
Caroline Rand Herron

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS:
Sallie Ellsworth
Mary Kaplan

STAFF:
Eva Barczay, Marie Grasberger, Ann Kaplan

POETRY CONSULTANT:
John Hollander

PUBLICATIONS AND ADVISORY BOARD:
Louis G. Cowan, Chairman
H. William Fitelson, Sidney Hook,
John Sargent, Richard Schlatter,
Roger W. Straus, Jr., Gore Vidal

PARTISAN REVIEW is at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. It is published quarterly by The American Committee for Cultural Freedom, Inc., and is a member of The Council of Literary Magazines.

Subscriptions: $4.50 a year, $8.50 for two years; foreign subscriptions, Including Canada, $5.00 a year, $9.50 for two years. All payments from foreign countries must be made by U.S. money orders or checks payable in U.S. currency or with $0.50 added for collection charges. Single copy: $1.25.

No manuscripts will be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. No responsibility is assumed for their loss or injury. © Copyright 1966, by PARTISAN REVIEW. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

Distributed in the U.S.A. by Doubleday and Co., Inc. and B. DeBoer, Nutley, N. J. Distributed in England, the British Commonwealth, and Europe by Chatto and Windus, Ltd., 40-42 William IV St., London, W.C. 2, England.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WINTER 1966 VOLUME XXXIII, NUMBER 1

CONTENTS

STORIES

Grigia
Robert Musil 13

Doctors of Philosophy (a play)
Muriel Spark 61

ARTICLES

The New Radicalism: Round IV
Norm Fruchter, Tom Hayden, Sargent Shriver 34

An American Abroad
Leslie A. Fiedler 77

In Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse
Eric Bentley 97

POEMS

Crossing the Frontier, Morning Meditation, Dragon Music
A. D. Hope 92

VARIETY

Sex and the Superman
Richard Kluger 111

YUGOSLAV REPORT

Writers and Conferences
Susan Sontag 116

BOOKS

Starting Out In The Thirties by Alfred Kazin, Kenneth S. Lynn 126

The Motorcycle by André Pieyre de Mandiargues; The Interrogation by J. M. G. LeClézio, Peter Brooks 128

A Natural Perspective by Northrop Frye, Reuben A. Brower 132

Going To Meet The Man by James Baldwin, Stephen Donadio 136

Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1812 by Geoffrey H. Hartman, Morris Dickstein 139

Selected Works Of Alfred Jarry edited by Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, Stephen Koch 143

The Accidental Century by Michael Harrington, Ben B. Seligman 148

ARGUMENTS

Situating Sartre
Lionel Abel, Stuart Hampshire 152

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford University Press

The Strange Career of Jim Crow

Second Revised Edition

By C. Vann Woodward, *Yale University.* "Already recognized as a landmark in the history of American race relations, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* in this revised and expanded edition is indispensable for properly understanding the great Negro revolution of our own times."—DAVID DONALD, *Johns Hopkins University.* "It is one of the most valuable works we have in the entire literature of the American racial dilemma . . . many new and pertinent insights."—WILLIAM STYRON

Cloth, $4.50. *Paper,* GB 6 $1.50

English History 1914-1945

By A. J. P. Taylor, *Magdalen College, Oxford.* "This is quite definitely the best whole history of the two World Wars and the intervening period . . . that I have encountered. Its chief merit lies in its meticulous documentation and the vast range of his canvas. Here is history in well-meshed triplicate—political, social, economic. And beautifully balanced."—BERNARD HOLLOWOOD, *Book Week* $9.75

The Poverty of Abundance

Hoover, the Nation, the Depression

By Albert U. Romasco, *New York University.* "A penetrating and sophisticated study of the response of American institutions, including the Presidency, to the Depression years."—WALTER JOHNSON. "A sound and comprehensive account of real merit, filling an important gap in our knowledge of 20th century history."—FRANK FREIDEL $6.00

Poor Richard's Politicks

Benjamin Franklin and His New American Order

By Paul W. Conner, *Princeton University.* "An urbane, gracefully written study . . . an excellent job of placing Franklin's concepts within the larger realm of Eighteenth Century thought. . . . One of the best things done on Franklin."—WILLIAM S. HANNA. "A serious contribution to the discussion of the meaning of Franklin and of the American Enlightenment. It is scholarly, intelligent and well written—and it is provocative."—HENRY STEELE COMMAGER, *Book Week* $6.50

Oxford University Press / New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford University Press

The Spectator

By Donald F. Bond, *University of Chicago.* As George Sherburn stated, "If one wishes to know what the eighteenth-century Londoners thought about, one can do no better than to read *The Spectator.*" The present edition is the first in over sixty years and also the first to provide an authoritative text, based upon a complete collation of the original sheets—all 635 essays are reprinted. An extensive introduction and commentary by Professor Bond throw new light on problems of publication and authorship and enable the reader to enjoy these essays against the background of their own times. *5 plates.* *In five volumes.* $70.60 *per set*

Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith

By Arthur Friedman, *University of Chicago.* This is the first collected edition of Goldsmith in eighty years. It contains those works traditionally thought to have literary interest and a few other miscellaneous pieces. The texts have been established by a study of all relevant editions and manuscripts, and some pieces are printed here for the first time since the eighteenth century. The editor provides introductions and explanatory notes where necessary. *5 plates.* *In five volumes.* $53.80 *per set*

The Irish Stage in the County Towns 1720-1800

By William Smith Clark, *University of Cincinnati.* In this continuation of Professor Clark's *The Early Irish Stage: The Beginning to 1720,* the period of theatrical expansion is described in a tour of nine leading county seats. The author includes in the record of stage activities those contemporary changes which affected the development of dramatic entertainment. Considerable new information about the playhouses has been drawn from all available Irish provincial newspapers of the period and from manuscripts and stage account books. *12 plates.* $11.20

Johnson, Boswell and their Circle

Essays Presented to Lawrence Fitzroy Powell in Honor of his 84th Birthday

Edited by Mary Lascelles and J. D. Fleeman, *Oxford,* **James L. Clifford,** *Columbia,* **and John Hardy,** *Toronto.* These essays, ten by American and ten by British writers, have been gathered from among Dr. Powell's many eminent friends who work in the field of his chosen studies: that social and literary circle which Johnson and Boswell together enlivened in such various ways. In exploring it, they draw upon a considerable range of writings by its members, and records concerning them, previously overlooked or unpublished. $7.70

Oxford University Press / New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES

ROBERT MUSIL's "Grigia" is from **Five Women,** which will be published by Delacorte Press—A Seymour Lawrence Book. . . . **NORM FRUCHTER** and **TOM HAYDEN** are both editors of Studies on the Left. Mr. Fruchter lives in New York, and is helping edit a feature-length documentary on the Newark (New Jersey) Community Union Project, in which Mr. Hayden has been an organizer since 1964. Mr. Hayden tells us that he has just returned from a "Christmas fact-finding mission to Prague, Moscow, Peking, [and] Hanoi to understand better the approach to peace of the National Liberation Front and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." **SARGENT SHRIVER** is Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. *This is his first appearance in* **PR.** . . . *Knopf is publishing* the full text of **MURIEL SPARK's Doctors of Philosophy.** The play was first performed at the New Arts Theatre Club in London. . . . A shorter version of **LESLIE FIEDLER's** piece will appear as the Afterword to the Signet Classic edition of **Innocents Abroad.** In April, Stein and Day is bringing out a revised edition of Mr. Fiedler's **Love and Death in the American Novel.** . . . **A. D. HOPE** is an Australian poet. Viking is putting out his **Collected Poems: 1930-1965** this year. . . . **ERIC BENTLEY's** latest book is **The Life of the Drama.** Mr. Bentley spent last year in Berlin as one of the Ford Foundation's Artists in Residence. . . . **RICHARD KLUGER,** editor of **Book Week,** tells us, of his qualifications to write about comics, that "he grew up reading comic books when he should have been reading Robert Louis Stevenson." . . . **SUSAN SONTAG** is working on a new novel. . . . **KENNETH S. LYNN** teaches English and is Chairman of the Committee on Higher Degrees in the History of American Civilization at Harvard. . . . **PETER BROOKS** is a member of the French Department at Yale. . . . **REUBEN A. BROWER** teaches English at Harvard. . . . **STEPHEN DONADIO** is a young writer living in New York. . . . **MORRIS DICKSTEIN** is working on a book on Keats, and will be teaching at Columbia next year. . . . **STEPHEN KOCH** is on the faculties of Stony Brook and the New School. . . . **BEN B. SELIGMAN** teaches economics and is Director of the Labor Relations and Research Center at the University of Massachusetts. . . . Macmillan is bringing out **LIONEL ABEL's The Intellectual Adventure of Jean-Paul Sartre** and **STUART HAMPSHIRE** is Chairman of the Philosophy Department at Princeton. . . . We renamed one person last issue—Robert Garis became Roger Garis on our cover. Our apologies.

The discussion on Vietnam, begun in the Summer 1965 **PR,** will be continued in the next issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOLLINGEN SERIES

The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Edited by KATHLEEN COBURN

This first complete edition of the Notebooks will consist of five volumes, 6" x 9", each boxed in two parts, with copious editorial notes, tables, maps, indexes. Number L in Bollingen Series.

VOLUMES AVAILABLE NOW

Volume 1: 1794-1804

Some 1800 entries, including descriptions of the Lake Country, notes on Coleridge's travels in Germany, and language studies. xlii + 546 pp., xliv + 615 pp., 4 plates. Double volume $12.50

Volume 2: 1804-1808

Nearly 1400 entries, throwing light on Coleridge's Mediterranean voyage, his government service in Malta, his Italian travels, his opium addiction, his love for Sara Hutchinson. There is also material on his metrical experiments, his studies of Italian poetry and language, and his attempts at writing cipher. xx + 479 pp., xxiv + 548 pp., 9 plates, 3 maps. Double volume $12.50

IN PREPARATION:

Volume 3: 1808-1819

This volume covers the most troubled yet productive days of the poet's life — his quarrel with Wordsworth, and the progressive torment of his drug addiction before rescue by Dr. Gillman. With many observations on love, marriage, children, grammar, poetics, religion, chemistry, politics, wit.

Please order from your bookstore. Published by Bollingen Foundation. Distributed by Pantheon Books, 22 East 51st St., New York City 10022. For detailed catalogue, write to Bollingen Series, 140 East 62nd St., New York City 10021

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Pursuit of Certainty

SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN

In a study of David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Beatrice Webb, Mrs Letwin examines the relationship between changes in the understanding of political activity and in general views of human life during the last two centuries in England. $9.50

Varieties of Parable

LOUIS MACNEICE

A survey of parable writing, including symbolism, allegory, fable, fantasy and myth, in which the late Louis MacNeice discusses the works of many authors who project special worlds. Among these are Spenser, Coleridge, Blake, Eliot, Kafka, William Golding and Samuel Beckett. $4.50

The Reign of Wonder

TONY TANNER

Walt Whitman, Henry James, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway and J. D. Salinger are some of those chosen by Tony Tanner to demonstrate his thesis that many of the best American writers, when dealing with reality, are dominated by an attitude of wonder and naivety. "An important contribution to the understanding of American literature."—*The Yale Review*

$8.50

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 East 57th Street, New York, N. Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Musil

GRIGIA

There is a time in life when everything perceptibly slows down, as though one's life were hesitating to go on or trying to change its course. It may be that at this time one is more liable to disaster.

Homo had an ailing little son. After this illness had dragged on for a year, without being dangerous, yet also without improving, the doctor prescribed a long stay at a spa; but Homo could not bring himself to accompany his wife and child. It seemed to him it would mean being separated too long from himself, from his books, his plans and his life. He felt his reluctance to be sheer selfishness, but perhaps it was rather more a sort of self-dissolution, for he had never before been apart from his wife for even as much as a whole day; he had loved her very much and still did love her very much, but through the child's coming this love had become frangible, like a stone that water has seeped into, gradually disintegrating it. Homo was very astonished by this new quality his life had acquired, this frangibility, for to the best of his knowledge and belief nothing of the love itself had ever been lost, and during all the time occupied with preparations for their departure he could not imagine how he was to spend the approaching summer alone. He simply felt intense repugnance at the thought of spas and mountain resorts.

So he remained alone at home, and on the second day he received a letter inviting him to join a company that was about to reopen the old Venetian gold mines in the Val Fersena. The letter was from a certain Mozart Amadeo Hoffingott, whom he had met while traveling some years previously and with whom he had, during those few days, struck up a friendship.

Copyright © 1965 by Martin Secker & Warburg Limited.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yet not the slightest doubt occurred to him whether the project was a sound one. He sent off two telegrams, one to tell his wife that he was, after all, leaving instantly and would send his address, the other accepting the proposal that he should join the company as its geologist and perhaps even invest a fairly large sum in the reopening of the mines.

In P., a prosperous, compact little Italian town in the midst of mulberry groves and vineyards, he joined Hoffingott, a tall, handsome, swarthy man of his own age who was always enormously active. He now learned that the company was backed by immense American funds, and the project was to be carried out in great style. First of all a reconnaissance party was to go up the valley. It was to consist of the two of them and three other partners. Horses were bought, instruments were due to arrive any day, and workmen were being engaged.

Homo did not stay in the inn, but—he did not quite know why—in the house of an Italian acquaintance of Hoffingott's. There he was struck by three things. The beautiful mahogany beds were indescribably cool and soft. The wallpaper had an indescribably bewildering, maze-like pattern, at once banal and very strange. And there was a cane rocking chair. Sitting in that chair, rocking and gazing at the wallpaper, one seemed to turn into a mere tangle of rising and falling tendrils that would grow within a couple of seconds from nothingness to their full size and then as rapidly disappear into themselves again.

In the streets the air was a blend of snow and the South. It was the middle of May. In the evening the place was lit by big arc lights that hung from wires stretched across from house to house, so high that the streets below were like ravines of deep blue gloom, and there one picked one's way along, while away up in the universe there was a spinning and hissing of white suns. By day one looked out over vineyards and woods. It was still all red, yellow and green after the winter, and since the trees did not lose their leaves, the fading growth and the new were interlaced as in graveyard wreaths. Little red, blue and pink villas still stood out very vividly among the trees, like scattered cubes inanimately manifesting to every eye some strange morphological law of which they themselves knew nothing. But higher up the woods were dark, and the mountain was called Selvot. Above the woods there was pasture land, now still covered with snow, the broad, smooth, wavy lines of it running across the neighboring mountains and up the steep

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little side valley where the expedition was to go. When men came down from these mountains to sell milk and buy polenta, they sometimes brought great lumps of rock crystal or amethyst, which was said to grow as profusely in many crevices up there as in other places flowers grow in the field, and these uncannily beautiful fairy-tale objects still further intensified his impression that behind the outward appearance of this district, this appearance that had the flickering remoteness and familiarity the stars sometimes have at night, there was hidden something that he yearningly awaited. When they rode into the mountain valley, passing Sant' Orsola at six o'clock, by a little stone bridge across a mountain rivulet overhung with bushes there were, if not a hundred, at least certainly a score of nightingales singing. It was broad daylight.

When they were well in the valley, they came to a fantastic place. It hung on the slope of a hill. The bridle path that had brought them now began sheerly to leap from one huge flat boulder to the next, and flowing away from it, like streams meandering downhill, were a few short, steep lanes disappearing into the meadows. Standing on the bridle-path, one saw only forlorn and ramshackle cottages; but if one looked upward from the meadows below it was as though one had been transported back into a prehistoric lake-village built on piles, for the front of each house was supported on tall beams, and the privies floated out to one side of them like litters on four slender poles as tall as trees. Nor was the surrounding landscape without its oddities. It was a more than semicircular wall of high, craggy mountains sweeping down steeply into a crater in the center of which was a smaller wooded cone, and the whole thing was like a gigantic empty pudding mold with a little piece cut out of it by a deep-running brook, so that there it yawned wide open against the high flank of the slope on which the village hung. Below the snow line there were corries, where a few deer strayed in the scrub, and in the woods crowning the round hill in the center the blackcock were already on display. The meadows on the sunny side were flowered with yellow, blue and white stars, as big as thalers emptied out of a sack. But if one climbed another hundred feet or so beyond the village, one came to a small plateau covered with ploughed fields, meadows, hay barns and a sprinkle of houses, with a little church, on a bastion that jutted over the valley, gazing out over the world that on fine days lay far beyond

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the valley like the sea beyond the mouth of a river: one could scarcely tell what was still the golden-yellow distance of the blessed plain and where the vague cloud-floors of the sky had begun.

It was a fine life they led there. All day one was up in the mountains, working at old blocked mine shafts, or driving new ones into the mountainside, or down at the mouth of the valley where a wide road was to be built: and always one was in gigantic air that was already soft, pregnant with the imminent melting of the snow. They poured out money among the people and held sway like gods. They had something for them all to do, men and women alike. The men they organized into working parties and sent them up the mountains, where they had to spend the week; the women they used as porters, sending them in columns up the almost impassable mountainside, bringing provisions and spare parts. The stone schoolhouse was turned into a depot where their stores were kept and whence they were distributed. There a commanding male voice rapped out orders, summoning one by one the women who stood waiting and chattering, and the big basket on each woman's back would be loaded until her knees gave and the veins in her neck swelled. When one of those pretty young women had been loaded up, her eyes stared and her lips hung open; then she took her place in the column and, at a sign, these now silent beasts of burden slowly began to set one foot before the other up the long, winding track into the heights. But it was a rare and precious burden that they bore, bread, meat and wine, and there was no need to be too scrupulous about the tools either, so that besides their wages a good deal that was useful found its way to their own households, and therefore they carried the loads willingly and even thanked the men who had brought these blessings into the mountains. And it was wonderful to feel: here one was not, as everywhere else in the world, scrutinized to see what sort of human being one was—whether one was reliable, powerful and to be feared, or delicate and beautiful—but whatever sort of human being one was, and no matter what one's ideas about life and the world were, here one met with love because one had brought blessings. Love ran ahead like a herald, love was made ready everywhere like a bed freshly made up for the guest, and each living being bore gifts of welcome in his eyes. The women could let that be freely seen, but sometimes as one passed a meadow there might be an old peasant there, waving his scythe like Death in person.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There were, indeed, peculiar people living at the head of this valley. Their forefathers had come here from Germany, to work in the mines, in the times when the bishops of Trent were mighty, and they were still like some ancient weathered German boulder flung down in the Italian landscape. They had partly kept and partly forgotten their old way of life, and what they had kept of it they themselves probably no longer understood. In the spring the mountain torrents wrenched away the earth from under them, so that there were houses that had once stood on a hill and were now on the brink of an abyss; but nobody lifted a finger to contend with the danger, and by a reverse process the new age was drifting into their houses, casting up all sorts of dreadful rubbish. One came across cheap, shiny cupboards, oleographs and humorous postcards. But sometimes too there would be a saucepan that their forebears might well have used in Luther's time. For they were Protestants; but even though it was doubtless no more than this dogged clinging to their beliefs that had prevented their being Italianized, they were certainly not good Christians. Since they were poor, almost all the men left their wives shortly after marrying and went to America for years on end; when they came back, they brought with them a little money they had saved, the habits learned in urban brothels, and the irreligion, but not the acuity, of civilization.

Right at the beginning Homo heard a story that interested him extraordinarily. Not long before—it might have been some fifteen years previously—a peasant who had been away for a long time came home from America and bedded with his wife again. For a while they rejoiced because they were reunited, and they lived without a care until the last of his cash had melted away. Then, when the rest of his savings, which had been supposed to come from America, still failed to arrive, the peasant girded himself up and—as all the peasants in this district did—went out to earn a living as a peddler, while his wife continued to look after the unprofitable smallholding. But he did not come back. Instead, a few days later, on a smallholding some distance from the first, the peasant returned from America, reminded his wife how long it had been, exactly to the day, asked to be given a meal exactly the same as that they had had on the day he left, remembered all about the cow that no longer existed, and got on decently with the children sent him by Heaven during the years

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when he was away. This peasant too, after a period of relaxation and good living, set off with peddler's wares and did not return. This happened a third and a fourth time in the district, until it was realized that this was a swindler who had worked with the men over there and questioned them thoroughly about their life at home. Somewhere he was arrested and imprisoned, and none of the women saw him again. This, so the story went, they all were sorry about, for each of them would have liked to have him for a few days more and to have compared him with her memories, in order not to have to admit she had been made a fool of; for each of them claimed to have noticed something that did not quite correspond to what she remembered, but none of them was sufficiently sure of it to raise the matter and make difficulties for the husband who had returned to claim his rights.

That was what these women were like. Their legs were concealed by brown woolen skirts with deep borders of red, blue, or orange, and the kerchiefs they wore on their heads and crossed over the breast were cheap printed cotton things with a factory-made pattern, yet somehow, too, something about the colors or the way they wore these kerchiefs suggested bygone centuries. There was something here that was much older than any known peasant costume; perhaps it was only a gaze, one that had come down through the ages and arrived very late, faint now and already dim, and yet one felt it clearly, meeting one's own gaze as one looked at them. They wore shoes that were like primitive dugout canoes, and because the tracks were so bad they had knife-sharp iron blades fitted into the soles, and in their blue or brown stockings they walked on these as the women walk in Japan. When they had to wait, they sat down, not on the edge of the path, but right on the flat earth of the path itself, pulling up their knees like Negroes. And when, as sometimes happened, they rode up the mountains on their donkeys, they did not sit on their skirts, but rode astride like men, their thighs insensitive to the sharp wooden edges of the baggage-saddles, their legs again raised indecorously high and the whole upper part of the body faintly swinging with the animal's movement.

And they had, besides, a bewilderingly frank friendliness and kindliness. "Do you come in," they would say, with all the dignity of great ladies, if one knocked at their rustic doors. Or if one stood chatting with them for a while in the open air, one of them might

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suddenly ask with extreme courtesy and reserve: "Shall I not hold your coat for you?" Once, when Homo said to a charming fourteen-year-old girl: "Come in the hay"—simply because "the hay" suddenly seemed as natural to him as fodder is to cattle—the childish face under the pointed, ancestral kerchief showed not the slightest dismay: there was only a mirthful puffing and flashing, a tipping this way and that on the rocking shoe-boats, and almost a collapse on to her little bottom, with her rake still on her shoulder, the whole performance conveying, with winsome clumsiness, comic-opera astonishment at the man's intensity of desire.

Another time he asked a tall, Valkyrie-like peasant woman: "Well, and are you still a virgin?" and chucked her under the chin —this time, too, merely because such jests need a touch of virile emphasis.

But she let her chin rest quietly on his hand and answered solemnly: "Yes, of course. . . ."

Homo was taken aback. "You're still a virgin!" he repeated, and laughed.

She giggled.

"Tell me!" he said, drawing closer and playfully shaking her chin.

Then she blew into his face and laughed. "Was once, of course!"

"If I come to see you, what can I have?" he went on with his cross-examination.

"Whatever you want."

"Everything I want?"

"Everything."

"Really everything?"

"Everything! Everything!" and her passion was so brilliantly and passionately acted, that the theatrical quality of it, up here, nearly 5,000 feet above sea level, left him quite bewildered.

After this he could not rid himself of the feeling that this life, which was brighter and more highly spiced than any life he had led before, was no longer part of reality, but a play floating in the air.

Meanwhile summer had come. When he had received the first letter and recognized his ailing little boy's childish handwriting, the shock of happiness and secret possession had flashed right through him, down to the soles of his feet. Their knowing where he was seemed to give everything tremendous solidity. He was here: oh, now every-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing was known and he had no more need to explain anything. All white and mauve, green and brown, there were the meadows around him. He was no phantom. A fairy-tale wood of ancient larches, feathery with new green, spread over an emerald slope. Under the moss there might be living crystals, mauve and white. The stream in the midst of the wood somewhere ran over a boulder, falling so that it looked like a big silver comb. He no longer answered his wife's letters. Here, amid the secrets of Nature, their belonging together was only one secret more. There was a tender scarlet flower, one that existed in no other man's world, only in his, and thus God had ordered things, wholly as a wonder. There was a place in the body that was kept hidden away, and no one might see it lest he should die: only one man. At this moment it seemed to him as wonderfully senseless and unpractical as only profound religious feeling can be. And only now did he realize what he had done in cutting himself off for this summer and letting himself drift on his own tide, this tide that had taken control of him. Among the trees with their arsenic-green beards he sank down on one knee and spread out his arms, a thing he had never done before in all his life, and it was as though in this moment someone lifted him out of his own embrace. He felt his beloved's hand in his, her voice sounded in his ear, and it was as though even now his whole body were answering to a touch, as though he were being cast in the mold of some other body. But he had invalidated his life. His heart had grown humble before his beloved, and poor as a mendicant; only a little more, and vows and tears would have poured from his very soul. And yet it was certain that he would not turn back, and strangely there was associated with his agitation an image of the meadows in flower round about these woods, and despite all longing for the future a feeling that here, amid anemones, forget-me-not, orchids, gentian, and the glorious greenish-brown sorrel, he would lie dead. He lay down and stretched out on the moss. "How am I to take you across with me?" he asked himself. And his body felt strangely tired, was like a rigid face relaxing into a smile.

Here he was, having always thought he was living in reality—but was there anything more unreal than that one human being should for him be different from all other human beings?—that among innumerable bodies there was one on which his inmost existence was almost as dependent as on his own body?—whose hunger and fatigue,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hearing and seeing, were linked with his own? As the child grew older, this had grown—as the secrets of the soil grow into a sapling—into earthly cares and comforts. He loved his child, but just as the boy would outlive them, so too the boy had earlier killed the otherworldly part of them. And suddenly he flushed hot with a new certainty. He was not a man inclined to religious belief, but at this moment he was illumined within. Thoughts cast as little light as smoky candles in this great radiance of emotion that he experienced; it was all simply one glorious word blazing with the light of youth: Reunion. He was taking her with him for all eternity, and in the moment when he yielded to this thought, the little blemishes that the years had wrought in his beloved were taken from her and all was, eternally, the first day of all. Every worldly consideration vanished, and every possibility of tedium and of unfaithfulness, for no one will sacrifice eternity for the sake of a quarter of an hour's frivolity. And for the first time he experienced love beyond all doubt as a heavenly sacrament. He recognized the Providence that had guided his life into this solitude and felt the ground with its gold and jewels beneath his feet no longer as an earthly treasure, but as an enchanted world ordained for him alone.

From this day onward he was released from a bondage, as though rid of a stiff knee or a heavy rucksack. It was the bondage of wanting to be alive, the horror of dying. It did not happen to him as he had always thought it would, when in the fullness of one's strength one seems to see one's end approaching, so that one drinks more deeply of life, savors it more intensely. It was merely that he felt no longer involved, felt himself buoyed up by a glorious lightness that made him supreme lord of his own existence.

Although the mining operations had not progressed according to plan it was indeed a gold-digger's life they were leading. A lad had stolen wine, and that was a crime against the community, the punishment of which could count on general approval. The lad was brought in with his wrists bound. Mozart Amadeo Hoffingott gave orders that he should constitute a warning to others by being tied upright to a tree for a day and a night. But when the foreman came with the rope, in jest portentously swinging it and then hanging it over a nail, the lad began to tremble all over in the belief that he was about to be hanged. And it was always just the same—although this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was hard to explain—when horses arrived, either fresh horses from beyond the valley or some that had been brought down for a few days' rest: they would stand about on the meadow, or lie down, but would always group themselves somehow, apparently at random, in a perspective, so that it looked as if it were done according to some secretly agreed esthetic principle, just like that memory of the little green, blue and pink houses at the foot of Mount Selvot. But if they were up above, standing around all night tethered in some high corrie in the mountains, three or four at a time tied to a felled tree, and one had started out in the moonlight at three in the morning and now came past the place at half-past four, they would all look round to see who was passing, and in the insubstantial dawn light one felt oneself to be a thought in some very slow-thinking mind. Since there was some thieving, and various other risks as well, all the dogs in the district had been bought up to serve as guards. The patrols brought them along in whole packs, two or three led on one rope, collarless. By now there were as many dogs as men in the place, and one might well wonder which was actually entitled to feel he was master in his own house on this earth and which was only adopted as a domestic companion. There were purebred gun-dogs among them, Venetian setters such as a few people in this district still kept, and snappy mongrels like spiteful little monkeys. They too would stand about in groups that had formed without anyone's knowing why, and which kept firmly together, but from time to time the members of a group would attack each other furiously. Some were half starved, some refused to eat. One little white dog snapped at the cook's hand as he was putting down a plate of meat and soup for it, and bit one finger off.

At half-past four in the morning it was already broad daylight, though the sun was not yet up. When one passed the grazing land high up on the mountain, the cattle were still half asleep. In big, dim, white, stony shapes they lay with their legs drawn in under them, their hindquarters drooping a little to one side. They did not look at the passerby, nor after him, but imperturbably kept their faces turned towards the expected light, and their monotonously, slowly moving jaws seemed to be praying. Walking through the circle of them was like traversing some twilit, lofty sphere of existence, and when one looked back at them from above, the line formed by the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spine, the hind legs, and the curving tail made them seem like a scattering of treble signs.

There was plenty of incident. For instance, a man might break his leg, and two others would carry him into camp on their crossed arms. Or suddenly the shout of: "Take co-ver!" would ring out, and everyone would run for cover because a great rock was being dynamited for the building of the road. Once, at such a moment, a shower swept a few flickers of moisture over the grass. In the shelter of a bush on the far side of the stream there was a fire burning, forgotten in the excitement, though only a few minutes earlier it had been very important: standing near it, the only watcher left, was a young birch tree. And still dangling by one leg from this birch was the black pig. The fire, the birch, and the pig were now alone. The pig had squealed even while one man was merely leading it along on a rope, talking to it, urging it to come on. Then it squealed all the louder as it saw two other men come delightedly running towards it. It was frantic at being seized by the ears and unceremoniously dragged forward. It straddled all four legs in resistance, but the pain in its ears forced it to make little jumps onward. Finally, at the other end of the bridge, someone had grabbed a hatchet and struck it on the forehead with the blade. From that moment on everything went more quietly. Both forelegs buckled at the same instant, and the little pig did not scream again until the knife was actually in its throat. There was a shrieking, twitching blare, which sank down into a death rattle that was no more than a pathetic snore. All these were things Homo saw for the first time in his life.

When dusk fell, they all gathered in the little vicarage, where they had rented a room to serve as their mess. Admittedly the meat, which came the long way up the mountain only twice a week, was often going off, and not infrequently one had a touch of food poisoning. But still all of them came here as soon as it was dark, stumbling along the invisible tracks with their little lanterns. For what caused them more suffering than food poisoning was melancholy and boredom, even though everything was so beautiful. They swilled it away with wine. After an hour a cloud of sadness and ragtime hung over the room. The Gramophone went round and round, like a gilded hurdy-gurdy trundling over a soft meadow spattered with wonderful stars. They no longer talked to each other. They merely talked. What

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should they have said to each other, a literary man of independent means, a business man, a former inspector of prisons, a mining engineer and a retired major? They communicated in sign language —and this even though they used words: words of discomfort, of relative comfort, of homesickness—it was an animal language. Often they would argue with superfluous intensity about some question that concerned none of them, and would reach the point of insulting each other, and the next day seconds would be passing to and fro. Then it would turn out that nobody had meant a word of it. They had only done it to kill time, and even if none of them had ever really known anything of the world, each of them felt he had behaved as uncouthly as a butcher, and this filled them with resentment against each other.

It was that standard psychic unit which is Europe. It was idleness as undefined as at other times their occupation was. It was a longing for wife, child, home comforts. And interspersed with this, ever and again, there was a Gramophone. "Rosa, we're going to Lodz, Lodz, Lodz . . ." or: "Whate'er befall I still recall. . . ." It was an astral emanation of powder and gauze, a mist of far-off variety shows and European sexuality. Indecent jokes exploded into guffaws, each joke, it seemed, beginning: "You know the one about the Jew in the train. . . ." Only once somebody asked: "How far is it to Babylon?" And then everyone fell silent, and the major put on the "Tosca" record and, as it was about to start, said mournfully: "Once I wanted to marry Geraldine Farrar." Then her voice came through the horn, out into the room, and this woman's voice that all these drunken men were marveling at seemed to step into a lift, and the next instant the lift was flashing away up to the top with her, arriving nowhere, coming down again, bouncing in the air. Her skirts billowed out with the movement, with this up and down, this long lying close to, clinging tightly to, one note, and again there was the rise and fall, and with it all this streaming away as if for ever, and yet again and yet again and again this being seized by yet another spasm, and again a streaming out: a voluptuous ecstasy. Homo felt it was that naked voluptuousness which is distributed throughout all the things there are in cities, a lust no longer distinguishable from manslaughter, or jealousy, or business or motor car racing—ah, it was no longer lust, it was a craving for adventure—no, it was not a craving for adventure either,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it was a knife slashing down out of the sky, a destroying angel, angelic madness—the war?

From one of the many long flypapers trailing from the ceiling a fly had dropped in front of him and was lying on its back, poisoned, in the middle of one of those pools that the light of the paraffin lamps made in the scarcely perceptible wrinkles in the oilcloth—pools with all that sadness of very early spring, as if a strong wind had swept over them after rain. The fly made a few efforts, each weaker than the last, to turn over, and from time to time a second fly that was feeding on the oilcloth ran to see how it was getting on. Homo also kept a careful watch—the flies were a great nuisance here. But when death came, the dying fly folded its six little legs together, to a point, and kept them straight up like that, and then it died in its pale spot of light on the oilcloth as in a graveyard of stillness that could not be measured in inches or decibels, and which was nevertheless there. Someone was just saying: "They say someone's worked out that all the Rothschilds put together haven't enough money to pay for a third-class ticket to the moon."

Homo murmured to himself: ". . . Kill, and yet feel the presence of God? . . . Feel the presence of God and yet kill?" And with a flick of his forefinger he sent the fly right into the face of the major sitting opposite, which caused another incident and thus kept them occupied until the next evening.

By then he had already known Grigia for some time, and perhaps the major knew her too. Her name was Lene Maria Lenzi. That sounded like Selvot and Gronleit or Malga Mendana, had a ring as of amethyst crystals and of flowers, but he preferred to call her Grigia, pronounced Greeja, after the cow she had, which she called Grigia, Grey One. At such times she would be sitting at the edge of her meadow, in her mauve-brown skirt and dotted kerchief, the toes of her wooden clogs sticking up into the air, her hands clasped over her bright apron, and she would look as naturally lovely as a slender little poisonous mushroom, while now and then she called out to the cow grazing lower down the hillside. There were actually only two things she called: "Come a-here!" and: "Come a-up!" when the cow strayed too far. But if her cries were unavailing, there would follow an indignant: "Hey, you devil, come a-*here*!", and in the last resort she herself would go hurtling down the hillside like a flung

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stone, the next best piece of stick in her hand, to be aimed at the Grey One as soon as she was within throwing distance. Since, however, the cow Grigia had a distinct taste for straying valley-wards, the whole of this operation would be repeated with the regularity of pendulum-clockwork that is constantly dropping lower and constantly being wound higher again. Because this was so paradisically senseless, he teased her by calling her Grigia herself. He could not conceal from himself that his heart beat faster when from a distance he caught sight of her sitting there; that is the way the heart beats when one suddenly walks into the smell of pine needles or into the spicy air rising from the floor of woods where a great many mushrooms grow. In this feeling there was always a residual dread of Nature. And one must not believe that Nature is anything but highly unnatural: she is earthy, edgy, poisonous and inhuman at all points where man does not impose his will upon her. Probably it was just this that fascinated him in this peasant woman, and the other half of it was inexhaustible amazement that she did so much resemble a woman. One would, after all, be equally amazed, going through the woods, to encounter a lady balancing a teacup.

"Do you come in," she too had said, the first time he had knocked at her door. She was standing by the hearth, with a pot on the fire, and since she could not leave it, she made a courteous gesture towards the bench. After a while she wiped her hand on her apron, smiling, and held it out to her visitors: it was a well-formed hand, as velvety-rough as the finest sandpaper or as garden soil trickling between the fingers. And the face that went with the hand was a faintly mocking face, with delicate, graceful bones that one saw best in profile, and a mouth that he noticed very particularly. This mouth was curved like a Cupid's bow, yet it was also compressed as happens when one gulps, and this gave it, with its subtlety, a determined roughness, and to this roughness again a little trace of merriment, which was perfectly in keeping with the wooden shoes that the slight figure grew up out of as out of wild roots. . . . They had come to arrange some matter or other, and when they left, the smile was there again, and the hand rested in his perhaps a moment longer than when they had come. These impressions, which would have been so insignificant in town, out there in this solitude amounted to a shock, as though a tree had moved its branches in a way not to be explained by any stirring of the wind or a bird's taking flight.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A short time later he had become a peasant woman's lover. This change that had taken place in him much occupied his mind, for beyond doubt it was not something he had done, but something that had happened to him.

When he came the second time, Grigia at once sat down on the bench beside him, and when—to see how far he could already go—he put his hand on her lap and said: "You are the beauty of them all," she let his hand rest on her thigh and merely laid her own upon it. With that they were pledged to each other. And now he kissed her to set the seal upon it, and after the kiss she smacked her lips with a sound like that smack of satisfaction with which lips sometimes let go of the rim of a glass after greedily drinking from it. He was indeed slightly startled by this indecorum and was not offended when she rejected any further advances; he did not know why, he knew nothing at all of the customs and dangers of this place, and, though curious, let himself be put off for another day. "In the hay," Grigia had said, and when he was already in the doorway, saying goodbye, she said: "Goodbye till soon," and smiled at him.

Even on his way home he realized he was already happy about what had happened: it was like a hot drink suddenly beginning to take effect after an interval. The notion of going to the hay barn with her—opening a heavy wooden door, pulling it to after one, and the darkness increasing with each degree that it closes, until one is crouching on the floor of a brown, perpendicular darkness—delighted him as though he were a child about to play a trick. He remembered the kisses and felt the smack of them as though a magic band had been laid around his head. Picturing what was to be, he could not help thinking of the way peasants eat: they chew slowly, smacking their lips, relishing every mouthful to the full. And it is the same with the way they dance, step after step. Probably it was the same with everything else. His legs stiffened with excitement at these thoughts, as though his shoes were already sticking in the earth. The women lower their eyelids and keep their faces quite stiff, a defensive mask, so as not to be disturbed by one's curiosity. They let scarcely a moan escape them. Motionless as beetles feigning death, they concentrate all their attention on what is going on within them.

And so too it was. With the rim of her clog Grigia scraped together into a pile the scrap of winter hay that was still there,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and smiled for the last time when she bent to the hem of her skirt like a lady adjusting her garter.

It was all just as simple and just as magical as the thing about the horses, the cows, and the dead pig. When they were behind the beam, and heavy boots came thumping along the stony path outside, pounding by and fading into the distance, his blood pulsed in his throat; but Grigia seemed to know even at the third footstep whether the footsteps were coming this way or not. And she talked a magical language. A nose she called a neb, and legs she called shanks. An apron was for her a napron. Once when he threatened not to come again, she laughed and said: "I'll bell thee!" And he did not know whether he was disconcerted or glad of it. She must have noticed that, for she asked: "Does it rue thee? Does it rue thee much?" Such words were like the patterns of the aprons and kerchiefs and the colored border at the top of the stocking, already somewhat assimilated to the present because of having come so far, but still mysterious visitants. Her mouth was full of them, and when he kissed it he never knew whether he loved this woman or whether a miracle was being worked upon him and Grigia was only part of a mission linking him ever more closely with his beloved in eternity. Once Grigia said outright: "Thou'rt thinking other things, I can tell by thy look," and when he tried to pretend it was not so, she said: "Ah, all that's but glozing." He asked her what that meant, but she would not explain, and he racked his brains over it for a long time before it occurred to him that she meant he was glossing something over. Or did she mean something still more mysterious?

One may feel such things intensely or not. One may have principles, in which case it is all only an esthetic joke that one accepts in passing. Or one has no principles, or perhaps they have slackened somewhat, as was the case with Homo when he set out on his journey, and then it may happen that these manifestations of an alien life take possession of whatever has become masterless. Yet they did not give him a new self, a self for sheer happiness become ambitious and earthbound; they merely lodged, in irrelevantly lovely patches, within the airy outlines of his body. Something about it all made Homo sure that he was soon to die, only he did not yet know how or when. His old life had lost all strength; it was like a butterfly growing feebler as autumn draws on.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sometimes he talked to Grigia about this. She had a way of her own of asking about it: as respectful as if it were something entrusted to her, and quite without self-seeking. She seemed to regard it as quite in order that beyond the mountains there were people he loved more than her, whom he loved with his whole soul. And he did not feel this love growing less; it was growing stronger, being ever renewed. It did not grow dim, but the more deeply colored it became, the more it lost any power to decide anything for him in reality or to prevent his doing anything. It was weightless and free of all earthly attachment in that strange and wonderful way known only to one who has had to reckon up with his life and who henceforth may wait only for death. However healthy he had been before, at this time something within him rose up and was straight, like a lame man who suddenly throws away his crutches and walks on his own.

This became strongest of all when it came to hay-making time. The hay was already mown and dried and only had to be bound and fetched in, up from the mountain meadows. Homo watched it from the nearest height, which was like being high in a swing, flying free above it all. The girl—quite alone in the meadow, a polka-dotted doll under the enormous glass bell of the sky—was doing all sorts of things in her efforts to make a huge bundle. She knelt down in it, pulling the hay towards her with both arms. Very sensually she lay on her belly across the bale and reached underneath it. She turned over on her side and stretched out one arm as far as she could. She climbed up it on one knee, then on both. There was something of the dor-beetle about her, Homo thought—the scarab, of course. At last she thrust her whole body under the bale, now bound with a rope, and slowly raised it on high. The bundle was much bigger than the bright, slender little human animal that was carrying it—or was that not Grigia?

When, in search of her, Homo walked along the long row of hay-stacks that the peasant women had set upon the level part of the hillside, they were resting. He could scarcely believe his eyes, for they were lying on their hillocks of hay like Michelangelo's statues in the Medici chapel in Florence, one arm raised to support the head, and the body reposing as in flowing water. And when they spoke with him and had to spit, they did so with much art: with three fingers they would stop it up again. One might be tempted to laugh; only if

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one mixed with them, as Homo did when he was in search of Grigia, one might just as easily start in sudden fright at this crude dignity. But Grigia was seldom among them, and when at last he found her, she would perhaps be crouching in a potato-field, laughing at him. He knew she had nothing on but two petticoats and that the dry earth that was running through her slim, rough fingers was also touching her body. But the thought of it was no longer strange to him. By now his inner being had become curiously familiar with the touch of earth, and perhaps indeed it was not at the time of the hay-harvest at all that he met her in that field: in this life he was leading there was no longer any certainty about time or place.

The hay barns were filled. Through the chinks between the boards a silvery light poured in. The hay poured out green light. Under the door was a wide gold border.

The hay smelled sour—like the Negro drinks that are made of fermented fruits and human saliva. One had only to remember that one was living among savages here, and the next instant one was intoxicated by the heat of this confined space filled to the roof with fermenting hay.

Hay bears one up in all positions. One can stand in it up to the knees, at once unsure of one's footing and all too firmly held fast. One can lie in it as in the Hand of God, and would gladly wallow in God's Hand like a little dog or a little pig. One may lie obliquely, or almost upright like a saint ascending to heaven in a green cloud.

Those were bridal days and ascension days.

But one time Grigia declared it could not go on. He could not bring her to say why. The sharpness round the mouth and the little furrow plumb between the eyes, which before had appeared only with the effort of deciding which would be the nicest barn for their next meeting, now boded ill weather somewhere in the offing. Were they being talked about? But the other women, who did perhaps notice something, were always as smiling as over a thing one is glad to see. There was nothing to be got out of Grigia. She made excuses and was more rarely to be found, and she watched her words as carefully as any mistrustful farmer.

Once Homo met with a bad omen. His puttees had come undone and he was standing by a hedge winding them on again, when a peasant woman went by and said in a friendly way: "Let thy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stockings be—it won't be long till nightfall." That was near Grigia's cottage. When he told Grigia, she made a scornful face and said: "People will talk, and brooks will run," but she swallowed hard, and her thoughts were elsewhere. Then he suddenly remembered a woman he had seen up here, whose bony face was like an Aztec's and who spent all her time sitting at her door, her black hair loose, hanging down below her shoulders, and with three healthy, round-cheeked children around her. Grigia and he unthinkingly passed by her every day, yet this was the only one of the local women whom he did not know, and oddly enough he had never asked about her either, although he was struck by her appearance: it was almost as though the healthiness of her children and the illness manifest in her face were impressions that always cancelled each other out. In his present mood he suddenly felt quite sure it was from here that the disturbing element must have come. He asked who she was, but Grigia crossly shrugged her shoulders and merely exclaimed: "She doesn't know what she says! With her it's a word here and a word over the mountains!" And she made a swift, energetic gesture, tapping her brow, as though she must instantly devalue anything that woman might have said.

Since Grigia could not be persuaded to come again into any of the hay barns around the village, Homo proposed going higher up the mountain with her. She was reluctant, and when at last she yielded, she said, in a tone that afterwards struck Homo as equivocal: "Well, then, if go we must."

It was a beautiful morning that once again embraced the whole world; far beyond, there lay the sea of clouds and of mankind. Grigia was anxious to avoid passing any dwelling, and even when they were well away from the village she, who had always been delightfully reckless in all arrangements to do with their love-making, showed concern lest they should be seen by watchful eyes. Then he grew impatient and it occurred to him that they had just passed an old mine shaft that his own people had soon given up trying to put back into use. There he drove Grigia in.

As he turned to look back for the last time, there was snow on a mountain peak and below it, golden in the sun, a little field of cornstalks, with the white and blue sky over it all.

Grigia made another remark that seemed strangely pointed. Noticing his backward glance, she said tenderly, "Better leave the blue

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alone in the sky, so it'll keep fine." But he forgot to ask what she meant by this, for they were already intent on groping their way further into darkness, which seemed to be closing around them.

Grigia went ahead, and when after a while the passage opened out into a small chamber, they stopped there and embraced. The ground underfoot seemed pleasantly dry and they lay down without Homo's feeling any of the civilized man's need to investigate it first by the light of a match. Once again Grigia trickled through him like soft, dry earth, and he felt her tensing in the dark, growing stiff with her pleasure. Then they lay side by side, without any urge to speak, gazing towards the little far-off rectangle beyond which daylight blazed white. And within him then Homo experienced over again his climb to this place, saw himself meeting Grigia beyond the village, then climbing, turning, and climbing, saw her blue stockings up to the orange border under the knee, her loose-hipped gait in those merry clogs, he saw them stopping outside the cavern, saw the landscape with the little golden field, and all at once in the brightness of the entrance beheld the image of her husband.

He had never before thought of this man, who was in the company's employ. Now he saw the sharp poacher's face with the dark, cunning eyes of a hunter, and suddenly remembered too the only time he had heard him speak: it was after creeping into an old mine shaft where nobody else had dared to go, and the man's words were: "I got into one fix after another. It's getting back that's hard."

Swiftly Homo reached for his pistol, but at the same instant Lene Maria Lenzi's husband vanished and the darkness all around was as thick as a wall. He groped his way to the entrance, with Grigia clutching his sleeve. But he realized at once that the rock that had been rolled across the entrance was much heavier than anything he could shift unaided. And now too he knew why her husband had left them so much time: he himself needed time to make his plan and get a tree trunk for a lever.

Grigia knelt by the rock, pleading and raging. It was repulsive in its futility. She swore that she had never done anything wrong and would never again do anything wrong. She squealed like a pig and rushed at the rock senselessly, like a maddened horse. In the end Homo came to feel that this was only in accordance with Nature, but he himself, a civilized man, at first could not overcome his incredulity,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could not face the fact that something irrevocable had really happened. He leaned against the rocky wall, his hands in his pockets, and listened to Grigia.

Later he recognized his destiny. As in a dream he felt it descending upon him once again, through days, through weeks, through months, in the way sleep must begin when it will last a very long time. Gently he put one arm round Grigia and drew her back. He lay down beside her and waited for something. Previously he would perhaps have thought that in such a prison, with no escape, love must be sharp as teeth; but he quite forgot to think about Grigia. She had slipped away from him, or perhaps he from her, even though he could still feel her shoulder touching his. His whole life had slipped away from him, just so far that he could still tell it was there, but without being able to lay his hand upon it.

For hours they did not stir. Days might have passed, and nights. Hunger and thirst lay behind them, like one eventful stage of the journey, and they grew steadily weaker, lighter, and more shut into themselves. Their half-consciousness was wide seas, their waking small islands. Once he started up, with glaring awareness, into one such small waking: Grigia was gone. Some certainty told him that it must have been only a moment earlier. He smiled . . . telling him nothing of the way out . . . meaning to leave him behind, as proof for her husband. . . ! He raised himself up on his elbow and looked about him. So he too discovered a faint, glimmering streak. He crawled a little nearer, deeper into the passage—they had always been looking in the other direction. Then he realized there was a narrow crevice there, which problably led out, obliquely, into the open air. Grigia had slender bones, yet even he, if he made an immense effort, might perhaps be able to worm his way through. It was a way out. But at this moment he was perhaps already too weak to return to life, or he had no wish to, or he had lost consciousness.

At this same hour, all efforts having proved unavailing and the futility of the undertaking having been recognized, Mozart Amadeo Hoffingott, down in the valley, gave orders for work to cease.

(*Translated by Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser.*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW RADICALISM: ROUND IV

PR's debate on the New Radicalism was opened in the Winter 1965 issue. Earlier contributions were by Michael Harrington, Nat Hentoff, Irving Howe, Stephen Rousseas, and Bayard Rustin.

Norm Fruchter

1. Most of the people whose work has occasioned all the recent publicity about "the new radicalism" probably read what is written about them, but are not much affected. Their imperatives for change were not significantly shaped by their reading of this country's official or literary radicals. Some of them are probably writing about what has shaped their experience and led them to reject, at least temporarily, the roles and careers their university education has projected for an uncertain and taxing activism in Negro and poor white communities, but the bulk of this country's official radicals will probably not read what the new organizers have to say about themselves. This situation, of limited, mostly one-way communication between official radicals, and a small but growing number of ex-students, results in meta-debates common in PR. Your contributors are not speaking to the people whose work has caused the debate, but are exercising their credentials as official radicals, and are defining (yet again) their political and economic analyses, and their choice of alternatives, for that amorphous, quasi-radical quasi-liberal literate community which is their real audience.[1]

2. The trouble is that your contributors' real audience, the literate community which is concerned, responsible and subscribes to innumerable journals, has never managed to make itself relevant to

1 These first notes were written, and prepared for publication, before Bayard Rustin's article appeared. None of the characterizations of literary radicalism are relevant to him; he has consistently worked to make his positions obvious to all of us.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the kind of change "the new radicals"[2] want. From innumerable different traditions, most of us come out of that literate community, and we are in despair about it. (Perhaps I should not allow myself the "we"; I am not very sure whom I speak for besides myself.) Most of the people who should understand the condemnations of American domestic and foreign policy which student organizers take for granted wind up on the wrong side of confrontations. Not only confrontations like the MFDP challenge in Atlantic City, which Mike Harrington refuses to understand, but confrontations within universities, about the right of a professor to welcome the victory of the Vietcong and still keep his job; confrontations within city politics, when self-styled liberals suddenly hedge at the demands for adequate representation of the poor on anti-poverty councils; confrontations within the peace movement, when veteran pacifists suddenly find a slap at Johnson's speciousness "irresponsible" and read Communist take-over into a declared policy of nonexclusion. What I think the experience within the fledgling organizing projects results in is a sense that the entire literate, liberal community can rarely be trusted to understand either the depth of the commitment to change or the necessity for it; one can depend on specific people for support of all kinds, but the community is so locked into the present institutional structure, and its assumptions—through their roles, professions, reputations—that at significant moments they will turn on the organizers as "too militant" or "irresponsible" or "pursuing a no-victory policy."

Let me try to make one example clear. I said that Mike Harrington still refuses to understand the MFDP *cause célèbre* in Atlantic City. Not accurate; in one sense he understands it too well. He is precise when he argues that no morality was involved in the compromise, because the MFDP delegation came prepared to compromise. They understood, through years of necessity, that the Democratic Convention was not about to unseat the white Mississippians and seat them; they knew that most of the Democratic delegates wished they had never come to present their demands. They also knew their demands were not only completely legitimate, but embarrassing, and on a

2 I use quotation marks for "the new radicals" because it is an applied, and not a chosen, label. I prefer the new activists as a label, because, as far as I can tell, few of them are certain about whether their work has resulted in the establishment of political positions which could meaningfully be called radical.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

national scale. Result? They could force some compromise. Harrington is right to argue that differing political perceptions determine the solution. But what "the new radicals" hold against Harrington, against Rauh, against Bayard Rustin, is that they took the wrong side in that confrontation. Rather than arguing with the administration for the maximum possible offer to the MFDP, their primary role was to attempt to argue the MFDP into accepting the pittance offered. What they decided, those official radicals, was that the maximum unruffled image of Johnson's Great Coalition was worth more than the claims of the MFDP; they did Johnson's work, not Fannie Lou Hamer's. Well, now they have Johnson, and they're stuck with him. They made a political choice, and all of those "new radicals" in the country who value the example and potential of the MFDP more than they value the potential of coalition politics will not depend on the understanding and support of Rustin, Harrington and the coalition crew. And the point is *not* that no coalitions or compromises will be necessary; they come up every day. What *is* involved is the identity of both parties to the compromise. When organizers and local people make the demands, and established radicals and liberals join local and national administrations in urging those organizers and local people to accept crumbs and stop upsetting the balance of power, perhaps those organizers and local people can be forgiven if they identify established liberals and radicals as part of that institutional system they seek to change.

3. Part of the usual coalition argument stresses the possibility of achieving, through unified trade union, civil rights, church and liberal pressure, an expanded public works program, vastly increased welfare programs, increased expenditures in public education—a ballooning welfare state. That argument has dropped off of late, probably because the coalitionists have begun to understand the point that "the new radicals" have been insisting on since they began their work in the ghettoes—the mechanisms of the welfare state are as responsible for damage as are the mechanisms of private finance and industry. Harrington is, or was, involved with the Poverty Program on the national level; does he know that the programs are a political grab-bag in most cities, a contemptible joke on the poor? He actually has the temerity to conclude that because only 2.7 percent of eligible "poor" voted for a community action council in Philadelphia, "*conscious, political* class cleavage between the poor and the rest of society" is probably not growing. Can he conceive the opposite con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clusion, that most of those 500,000 eligible voters were so turned off by the whole proposition, and so skeptical of the probable results of that council, that they never bothered to vote? Does he know anything about voting percentages in those areas of Philadelphia? Were they the same areas that rioted last summer? Does rioting indicate anything about growing class cleavages? Does Harrington know that both candidates and voters in that election had to be *certified* as poor, and is he capable of concluding that the process of certification may well have alienated a few of those potential 500,000 voters? Does Harrington know how much community work and publicity preceded that election? (The Newark Community Union Project's experience with Newark's Poverty Program showed that no organizing work was done in the neighborhood selected as Poverty Area Three—most people had never heard of the Poverty Program, had no idea they were in an eligible area, could attend board meetings, vote as members, select their officers, and help [in theory] to write their own programs.)

4. The ignorance and inexperience that Harrington exposes when he cites the percentage of voters in that poverty election I take as symbolic of the ignorance of coalitionists generally about the results of *all* federal and local welfare programs on the poor they are intended to benefit. They know little (though they should) about how all welfare programs backfire and damage; either they become sources for patronage or forces which manipulate the poor in response to bureaucratic imperatives. The coalitionists advocate new programs, more investments; "the new radicals" work to change the local balance of power, to get control of some of those programs "run for the poor and by the poor" and run them locally and democratically. It is indisputable that little real politics has come out of the work of "the new radicals"; it is also true that little design for a different political future, or a new radical movement, has yet emerged. There are possibilities which have been discussed at length (particularly in *Studies on the Left,* a journal both Tom Hayden and I work for), and many "new radicals" are committed to the search for and development of a new radical movement and a political party which that movement builds. Many established radicals may find that perspective, and those possibilities, faulty, hopeless. They may then counsel "intransigent despair," a position Stephen Rousseas takes which I think is real, and honorable. But what are the rest of your contributors doing?

5. The crux of my argument with Rustin concerns his vision

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the nature of, and the quality of life within that expanded welfare state which his coalition politics, if successful, would achieve. Given the changes Rustin's projected coalition would push for, this country would enjoy a more egalitarian income distribution, lower levels of unemployment, increased scale and quality of public services, and a more humane administration of social and welfare services. I am not arguing that these changes would not be meaningful for the lives of those the poverty literature calls "the dispossessed," or indeed, for all of us; I think these changes should be, and will be, fought for. Moreover, I agree with Rustin's estimate that these changes can be made; I tend to think most of them will be achieved even without a coalition or a liberal-radical movement explicitly designed to press for them. Implicit in Rustin's argument is an assumption that pressure-group activity, which seems to be a prerequisite for his projected coalition, has already effected the passage of the Civil Rights Acts and the War on Poverty. I would argue that both sets of acts were passed, and both were expanded, because of the pressure created by those massive portents of widespread social chaos—the Birmingham riots in 1963, the East coast riots in the summer of 1964, the Watts insurrection in August, 1965. I read Rustin's prescriptions for change as *description* of the liberalization of domestic policy which must take place if our ghettoes are not to be consigned to continuous explosion and repression; I think most Administration officials responsible for domestic policy, and most liberals, already perceive these changes as necessary for social stability.

But let us assume that a political coalition of liberal, labor, church and the poor is necessary for that liberalization of domestic policy. How much would this society's basic institutions be transformed? The priorities which determine the targets for expanded public works investment, or the locus of new social services, would still be set by private industry; the entire apparatus of our gargantuan forced-production and forced-consumption patterns would remain intact. Our foreign policy would still be imperialist; our media, our educational systems, and our current modes of institutionally supported status values would continue to make rational, if not meaningful, existence impossible. Rustin would be the first to argue that the basic structural change necessary to transform ownership and production in this society so that social values, rather than profit, shape our public services and our institutional priorities, simply *cannot* be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

effected. Therefore Rustin insists on what is *realistic*, on what can be achieved through modifications of the present balance of power. But let Rustin also be realistic enough to understand that in setting out what he judges the realistic possibilities for change, and in urging a politics aimed at those changes, he slurs his response to the greater irrationalities of our society. Accepting Rustin's coalition politics means accepting the current shape and value-patterns of the society in which those reformist changes might be achieved. Several men of Rustin's generation, and at least two of his colleagues, have written despairing analyses of the irrationality, perversity and finally the inhumanity that dogs this society; those books (Goodman's *People and Personnel,* Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, Harrington's *The Accidental Century* are only three of the most recent) have become required reading for the new activists. But read Rustin's article and try to find even a hint that he is still responding to the manifold inequities of this society. The accents of what by now seems to me an unanswerable critique of America's irrationality are absent in Rustin; what we get instead is *Realpolitik*.

6. The new activists are currently committed to a vision of change beyond amelioration, transcending *Realpolitik*. Rustin understands that they are not "rooted in an oppressed class," that "their motivation is moral (not material), their quest is for new values, not programs." It would be a simple step for Rustin to conclude that the new activists are at that point in their lives when they are free to stand opposed to the dominant values and the overriding rationale of this society. But to grant the new activists that coherent an opposition would be to grant them the possibility of *incipient* radicalism. Rustin concludes that the new activists are most fundamentally opposed, not to the basic structures of this current society, but to "hypocrisy, which is seen as *the* crippling disease of the American cultural and social order [Rustin's italics]." Rustin has confused response to symptom with analysis of cause, substituted surface animosity for underlying opposition. Having made this substitution, it is then simple to confound the new activists with their middle-class backgrounds, their moral motivations, their quest for "situations and experiences which are affirmations of meaningful personal existences, . . . a largely existential search." A most vulgar determinism informs all the passages of Rustin's article in which he tries to distinguish between real movements (i.e., those with a base, with numbers, with visible power), and the "ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ceedingly unoriginal existential subjectivism" of the new activists, who lack the experience of oppression, roots in an oppressed class, a mass-base to support them, or a "socialist movement which gave their theories flesh and blood substance." Aside from the image in the last phrase, which someone less charitable might consider "exceedingly unoriginal," consider the banality of the theoretical position. The reality of any specific critique of American society, according to Rustin, is measured in terms of power and support. Critiques, however fundamental, and no matter how often reinforced by what remains of our radical intellectual class, are suspect when they are not reinforced by the formation of a mass movement. The only mass movements which can be said to exist today are those formed in partial response to material need and social oppression. The new activists have suffered neither. Therefore, according to Rustin, the new activists are existentialists, not potential radicals. They may be in reaction against "the increasing bureaucratization and impersonalization of the campus, and . . . the vapidity, conformity, and boredom of middle-class life," but that response has nothing to do with an opposition to the basic structures of this society. Therefore, the new activists come to Negro and white ghettoes, *not* to attempt to build a base from which their opposition can become political, and their disaffiliation radical, but "in search of meaning." After such misinterpretation, outright abuse is welcome. "It would be the grossest slander," Rustin concludes, "to say that they go slumming."

7. What is clear is that, as I stated earlier, Rustin is no longer responsive to the irrationalities endemic to this society, that he has given up all hope of the *possibility* of basic structural change, and has chosen to work for ameliorative change through realignment politics because, in his judgment, such change goes to the *realistic* limits of the situation. But why should such realism result in so disastrous a misinterpretation of the prepolitical actions of the new activists? If an opposed, incipiently radical response to the totality of this society's values and operation is at all possible, then perhaps it is possible during those diffuse years of role-preparation we call university education, or in those few after graduation when countless young people "float," postponing their induction into the productive economy and its manifold and institutionalized forms of value-subversion. It used to be fashionable to upbraid these "floating" graduates as "disaffiliates," "irresponsibles," or more crudely, "beats." Now these same disaf-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

filiates have yoked their supposedly "subjective" response to an enlarging critique of this society, and have set out to build opposition movements in Negro and white ghettoes, among other places. No good; they are now charged with elitism, subjectivism, and arrogance. Suppose that some of these new activists come to Negro and white ghettoes, not "in search of meaning," but to find out if it is possible to develop and share their critique of society with people who have experienced qualitatively different and perhaps more damaging forms of material deprivation, social and political oppression, and those varied forms of social and psychic detachment we call alienation. The attempt may be misguided, even foolish; is it elitist? Many of the new activists may well know more at this point than Rustin does about how unsuitable poor whites and poor Negroes are to form the political constituency the new activists are trying to build. But the answers are not yet in, and they were certainly not obvious before the new activists began to work. The first evidence from the larger projects (JOIN in Chicago, NCUP in Newark) suggests both more ambiguity and more possibility than Rustin's judgments permit. What if Rustin, and all the sociologists who argue that the socially disruptive factors and the ignorance of organization which supposedly characterize the Negro community and preclude effective political organization, are wrong, and the new activists succeed in building a small, but vocal, radical movement? Would not that movement increase the chances for the change Rustin's projected coalition urges? His projected liberal-radical movement would have a smaller, more radical force to its left—a singular alteration of the dynamics of American politics. What Rustin and his colleagues refuse to understand is that the acceptance of *Realpolitik* precludes the possibility of transcendence; coalition politics dooms us to a reformist role within a society currently locked into an increasingly debilitating stasis. Our politics, and the possibilities for political choice and education among our youth, have been disastrously skewed and limited by the absence of any radical movement or party; coalitionists should understand that the chances for the ameliorative transformations they urge would be increased if such a movement or party, however small, built enough of a base to achieve national recognition.

8. My final argument may seem churlish. It is based on Rustin's admission that the coalition he seeks to form has not yet emerged. Why, then, must he and those he calls "others of my persuasion,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attempt to dragoon the new activists into accepting or supporting his efforts? Both Rustin and the new activists are only beginning their work, and the new activists are certainly not denying Rustin the right to pursue his own policies. Why should not only Rustin, but also the several other luminaries of that circuit of established radicals now comfortably ensconced in teaching posts across the country, be so hostile to the new activists' work? The new activists, and their current community alliances, probably amount to no more than 10,000 people across the country; their theoretical work is of such low calibre that established radicals delight in staging sideshows to demolish it; their political power is, at this writing, miniscule. Finally, and most important, only protest politics and city-level reform programs have emerged from their work; no elitist transformations or totalitarian solutions have been advanced. Why should so modest an attempt to transcend the current and bankrupt limits of established American radicalism so panic such eminent men? Once I, in my ignorance, imagined that the role of adult and established radicals was to orient themselves toward younger activism, to attempt to establish an instructive dialogue. What the new activists get from Rustin and several of his colleagues, however, is abuse and arrogance. Worse, it is a dangerous arrogance. For suppose I use Rustin's logic, and demand that he and his colleagues identify their constituency, the mass-base in whose name they speak, the movement whose ideals and politics they represent. By Rustin's own admission, he and his colleagues have not built their coalition. Perhaps they speak for no one but themselves, this band of arrogant but comfortable radicals dedicated to exposing and exploding the folly of more youthful activists' attempts? Is this not elitism? Is it not, to modify Rustin's charge against the new activists, "a most unoriginal . . . subjectivism?" Rustin and his colleagues claim to represent the crucial tradition of democratic socialism, but there has long been no socialist movement in this country to buttress their representation. They claim commitment to liberal democracy and opposition to totalitarianism, but in many specific cases, some of which Rustin knows well, and which have been the subject of continuing controversy in the magazine on whose staff he serves as Associate Editor, these social democrats have attempted to smash significant protests against our increasingly illiberal foreign and domestic policy, on the grounds of expediency or Communist take-over. Speaking in no one's name, without any popular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

support, these self-styled radicals and social democrats arrogate to themselves the right to define the limits of radicalism, and use their limited literary and political influence to attempt to disrupt and ridicule the only significant political activity underway in America which has the potential to transcend, and transform, some levels of this country's politics. Rustin's charge against the new activists might serve better as self-judgment: "I submit that this arrogance is not new. It is a distillation of the worst catastrophist varieties of sectarian leftism." Only substitute *accommodated* for *catastrophist.*

Tom Hayden

(*Note*: I thought the best way to comment on your discussion was to keep some notes on work I did after I received an invitation to write something for PR. They describe roughly what I was doing and what kinds of problems I thought over. They make no attempt to represent what other "new radicals" are doing and thinking.)

MONDAY: Staff meeting at 10:00. Mike was supposed to have found bail money for this afternoon in case we have trouble. He didn't. Connie said she'd call her sister's boyfriend and see if she could get money pledged by afternoon. I was worried because among these new people, the organizer is expected to be "competent" (know the law, get bail money, etc.). Behind the expectation are two things: (1) a sense of seriousness they feel, and they want proof that we also are serious; (2) some fear, a natural thing when it's the first demonstration for many of them, and they have to lead it themselves.

NOON: Tied up with phone calls to Episcopalian civil rights committee in New York; fund raising for the National People's Conference in Newark, August 27-29. (Fund raising always hectic, but the bills get paid.)

Finally got to 18th Avenue at 2:00 o'clock. Told Mrs. Queen, who lives in a two-room place with no toilet or closet, about the demonstration. Said she'd be there. Wondered whether she said it because she wants to "please" me: today would be a test. She's interested in the traffic light issue which people want to protest

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about, but more interested in "the Jew" who won't give her a toilet or a closet, and who will evict her if she complains. She uses the facilities next door, and hangs all her clothes on a big peg.

Miller was home from work (drives a truck for the county) at 3:00, so I caught him before he got in the house where I knew he would take a nap. In the first few discussions I had with him, he was what we call "strong." From Georgia, confidently supports a family and holds down a job, been stepped on by white people all his life, "very fond" of me but says I can't understand the race problem because I'm white. Hard on Johnson: "That man can pick up the phone and drop that ole bomb! Now why can't he pick up the phone and help us, you tell me that!" About the same question most people here ask, only Miller is perhaps angrier and more informed. His brother Willie, 19, also tough. Sitting on the porch with us, he said he'd like to "rack up" some white people like they did in Los Angeles. Everybody seems either to favor or absolve what the people did out there.

I began talking with Miller about the traffic light. When I first got here a month ago, the people I talked to thought the traffic problem was a good issue to organize around. I used to think such issues were "superficial," they didn't deal with "real problems," etc., but I've felt my thinking shift bit by bit this year. I had to learn that *real* children are killed, all the time; that families are worried about their *real* children. What the City fails to do about "minor" ills, which by its own laws it should correct, is a measure of the callousness of the officials. That the people accommodate, by their silence at least, to the City's failure on such small matters, is a measure of how deeply they feel the futility of changing anything. Most people I talked to see the traffic problem, not on the basis of narrow self-interest, but as part of a system so abrasive that it cannot implement its own laws without militant pressure. The twenty I'm working with see it as a departure point for a community movement, and a way to wrest something real from City Hall. They started with a petition, not because most people believe in "channels" as such, but because "we should give them a chance." A little apprehension too, over doing something "wild" that "other colored people" might not understand. So Sampson and I collected two hundred names one Saturday morning, and the following week Miller's sister Rosalie took them down to the Mayor's office. (She was afraid, because of Welfare,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but she did it anyway. Afterward I took her to see a CORE person who works at Welfare. He reassured her about her political rights, but told her to call him if anyone bothered her.)

Since then, two weeks ago, some of the people have favored "giving the City enough time," and others were for "protesting the run-around we're getting." Last week we held a meeting with people four blocks away who also want a traffic light, and the agreement was we'd back each other up if there was no action by today.

Miller had been missing meetings, because he had the flu just after his wife and father were sick, and today he was taking the more cautious position: "got to give them time. Some things they stall on, but some things, you know, takes time." His "gradualist" thinking was *not* that of a "Negro leader" trying to undermine radicalism. Miller's feeling reflected his experience of a militancy that went nowhere, and his interest in finding tactics which would get the traffic light as well as organize people. I told him we would have to go over to the other block and see what people wanted to do; if they wanted to go ahead and demonstrate, Miller said he would accept it. His brother went with several of us to the other block meeting.

FOUR O'CLOCK: The people on the other block, Avon Avenue, were in a different situation. They had seen someone, apparently from the Traffic Division, surveying the street on Friday. This made them feel as if it might be sensible to wait and see what the City would conclude about the petition which they, too, had sent in. However, since the people I was with from 18th Avenue had received *no* word from the City, the Avon folk said they were willing to go with us to demonstrate. I thought they were a little nervous and maybe caught in the trap of "procedure"—but I checked the feeling, because I'm usually much too suspicious or impatient. Sampson tended to agree with my instincts, I think, though as a community person, he tends more than I do to bristle when "his own people" don't seem militant. I said, finally, "OK, then, let's go over to 18th and demonstrate." About ten people—most of those there—came with me, Sampson and Willie. Walking over to 18th, I was a little nervous, partly because I never tried before to stop busy traffic, but mainly because I didn't know what people would think if only a few from our block came, or if we were all arrested and banged around.

When we got there, an early skirmish of what I expect to be a major political war for control of the Central Ward, had begun.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

About six Negro men were trying to prevent us from demonstrating, by cornering people and telling them not to be fooled by the "whites and outside agitators." They represented the Irvine Turner Association, in the absence of their leader, Turner, Central Ward councilman for a decade and the only Negro on City Council, who was sick. His power has rested on an ability to do favors, and also on his popularity, especially among the older people, as the first postwar "Negro leader." However, this power perhaps is being sapped because, first, his swaggering style belongs to a passing era of Negro politics and, second, his Civil Rights positions are far behind those of the newer Negro movements. Here was the first test, though, quite a bit earlier than I'd wanted it. His men were pushing us around a little, but our people told them very sharply to "get out the way of right." People were refusing to sit down with "their leaders."

We finally went into the street. The first time across, we just slowed traffic, then came back to the corner to see whether the police were going to do anything. There was a squad car one block away, parked, the patrolmen motionless. So we went out again, this time to block the traffic. Some of the people were even cooperative, and turned off their car engines. After about fifteen minutes, one policeman walked up to us, saying something very cordially to Sampson. You could tell they were terrified of another Los Angeles. The cop surprised us by agreeing to clear the street of traffic, and he went to create a detour two blocks around us. Then a Public Service bus tried to slip through our line as it was scattering, but Fred Douglas stopped it by running out in front of it. The two hundred of us cheered him, and everyone began to feel we were flexing a set of muscles the community had not felt before.

Zizza, the captain from the Fourth Precinct, finally came by. He took several people to a pay phone and called the Deputy Mayor, Paul Reilly, who said that he'd give us stop signs and a traffic cop within forty-eight hours, meet with us in the morning, and commence an immediate "traffic study" to determine if a traffic light is needed. They came back and we had a street meeting to hear the promises. Many of the people were dissatisfied, but no one wanted to stay out in the street after dark. So it ended, with everyone very pleased. I was especially happy because everyone I'd been working with came down and joined the picket line. Some people from the next block were

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there too, and they started planning a meeting to decide what to do.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK: Came back to apartment after eating with Sampson, who was jubilant. I read the papers, some of Sartre's *Nausea*, told a few staff people what happened, finally relaxed enough to fall asleep around 2:00. New fan in the room created cool air; people in Trenton gave it to us.

TUESDAY: Had to be up at 8:00, everyone else asleep, littered around on couches and the floor. J.C., a staff guy from the neighborhood, was asleep on the stairs because he came back late and the door was locked. Walked over to Vera's on Hunterdon where Junius sleeps, woke him up for the car keys. Got to 18th Avenue about 9:00, and drove downtown along with another carload. Let everyone off at City Hall, while I parked. Wanted to get in late, personally, so the officials wouldn't be able to deal with me as the leader. When I got upstairs, all nine people were sitting around the desk of the Deputy Mayor, Reilly. Newark, though it's over half Negro, is run currently by the Italians (most people think it's the syndicate). Reilly is the one Irish official around Mayor Addonizio, but he certainly doesn't appear to be anti-Administration. He looks like he is all pomade; he tries to talk, and gesture with his hand, like John Kennedy, but it comes off awkwardly. All the Newark political people are provincials. We first ran into Reilly during last summer's riot scare, when he came down to our office to persuade us against demonstrating. People made him wait outside the door for forty-five minutes, then spurned his pleas. We had several other encounters with him at his office, mostly so people would get experience in carrying their problems to City Hall. He always kept his provincial charm, except for the time that a woman threatened to hit him with his own ash tray.

This morning Reilly was cordial, surrounded by a half-dozen aides, including the chiefs of Sanitation, Traffic and Signals and the Fourth Police Precinct. The people were telling him off in relatively polite terms, no one acting as spokesman. One elderly lady told about all the accidents that happened during all the years she was a registered Democrat; Reilly thanked her for registering and reporting the accidents. A young guy said Newark is a "powder keg"; Reilly said the whole Administration was worried but felt that "communication" was better in Newark than other cities with racial tension. Sampson kept saying we would demonstrate again if a light wasn't put up; Reilly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

said he needed time to do things within the law. He said a "survey" was needed before the City could decide on a light, but he would take "immediate" precautions for children in the area. We left, giving him no sense of what we would do next.

We had a short meeting back on the street. Sampson and his brother, Fred Douglas, decided to make a leaflet telling the neighborhood what happened. Otherwise, we decided to wait a couple of days to see what the City would do.

I felt sick from not enough food and sleep, so I went over to Louise Patterson's and tried to rest on her couch. But staff people kept coming in, asking Louise for money (she's the "banker").

I went back to 18th Avenue, and spent the late afternoon sitting with some people on their porch.

EIGHT O'CLOCK: Stopped by at the Program Committee (weekly decision-making meeting in the Clinton Hill project) to tell them what happened at Reilly's office. About twenty-five people were there, half old people and half new. They are tied up especially in anti-poverty politics, since NCUP people elected the officers to the local area board. Since then they developed a proposal for a community-run recreation program. Already they are fighting with the police over who should run the "play streets"; the police are the official sponsors, but NCUP people make up much of the paid street staff. The battle will really come over the question of whether the City Administration will permit local people to set up a recreation program which would strengthen NCUP and independent poor working in the anti-poverty program. In Mississippi, they blow up the Movement's community centers; in Newark I think it might come to that if the City can find no "legal" way to undermine Movement institutions (play streets, recreation centers, a proposed cooperative store). About twenty-five people went down to Washington during the "Assembly of Unrepresented Peoples," and talked to the Office of Economic Opportunity about pressuring Newark to respect the participation of the poor in the War on Poverty. Like the Justice Department "protecting" Negro voting rights against hostile Southern officials, our people feel Shriver's office should protect the poor in the Poverty program against City Hall. Results of the meeting were vague; but at least an investigation is going on, and people now see the national character of the problem much more concretely.

It was both difficult and important to spend time at the Program

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Committee and feel separate from it. When I decided to move out of Clinton Hill, the original project area, and into the Central Ward area, it felt like I was tearing out all kinds of anchors that kept me secure. My other feeling was semi-panic about things that I'd worked on collapsing, an unrealized lack of confidence in other people. Getting over these feelings took time. We're all more or less conditioned to be at the "center of things" and around familiar people; this is reinforced when, as strangers in a ghetto, isolated from much of the established order, we develop all kinds of stakes in our basic community, the project. One of the strains of organizing, therefore, is that it propels you to move out of situations you've created, on towards strange new people and problems. The drain is serious.

NINE O'CLOCK: Dropped by meeting of United Freedom Ticket, an independent "party" of Negroes and whites running for state, county and city offices. Background: it began two years ago when the Essex County Democratic machine split with one of its Negro Assemblymen, George Richardson. He then organized the "New Frontier Democrats" with no support except from a few old friends, and ran an all Negro-Puerto-Rican ticket for state and county seats. The machine and others dismissed him as a crank, but his 10,000 votes were enough to allow several Republicans to defeat Democrats. Since then, he's compromised several issues, but remained the leader of the anti-machine civil rights forces in the city. This year he's widened his coalition to include liberal and radical whites. He's getting increased support from some Negro clergy, a little support from white religious and neighborhood leaders (some of whom think NCUP is far too extreme). He's getting no support, however, from the AFL-CIO or liberal whites who make up the county power structure of the Democratic party.

His political strength lies mostly in the vague but broad popularity he has in the Negro community, and in his talent for keeping a lot of bickering people together. His political program is loose, emphasizing Negro rights, rent control, opposition to urban renewal, a grass roots emphasis for the poverty program and a police review system. His campaign raises many issues; among them:

(1) *Leaders.* We've felt that fixed leaders are a danger because they tend to monopolize knowledge, contacts and decisions; they can reduce a movement to a body of dependent followers; they are shaped

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into "bargainers" who adapt to the styles of the powerful. Would a Richardson campaign carry us directly toward this trap?

(2) *Middle class programs.* Most political reform movements seek to make change *for* people; for example, a City Council stopping the Housing Authority "Negro removal" plans. The problem here is that the "solutions" are imposed administratively on people, life patterns are disrupted willy-nilly, and new problems are created. Such programs cannot reverse the dynamics of "welfare oppression" because they do not make the promotion of democracy their key value. Would Richardson offer only this kind of program?

(3) *Orthodox political campaigning.* Reformers and reactionaries alike tend to see people as objects to be "lined up" in support of their campaigns. The goal is to "win," so *any* tactic is allowed which creates votes. This can leave a shell organization after the campaign; the politician is safely cut off from organized and independent people, and he takes a seat at the bargaining tables remote from the ghetto. The shell then becomes a patronage machine geared to winning the next election, thus repeating the cycle. Not only are the voters therefore used, but a great number of people are never mobilized at all. They do not register, or they register and ignore voting. Their so-called apathy is rooted in a realistic view of the quality of politics and the possibilities for change. Would the dynamic of the campaign undermine NCUP's attempt to organize the really "alienated" people?

(4) *The coalition.* The Freedom Ticket, as Richardson conceives it, would include persons and groups of very different interests based on values, race, class, experience and personality. He hammers at the theme that each group should respect the validity of other approaches. We've had spotty relations with other groups here in the past, with most coalitions being formed around very immediate needs and lasting for short periods of time, while otherwise the various organizations keep some distance from each other. Richardson's ticket in fact includes certain people, for instance some ministers, who seem to think our activity is unacceptable. Some questions: do poor people need to be organized into groups of *their own*, in order to gain confidence, identity, and the power to genuinely bargain with other groups? How can we work with "leaders," such as the clergy, and also work with the people in their congregations to lead themselves? What kind of people, styles and rules of structure can satisfy so many competing interests?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In spite of these unanswered questions, I've been guardedly hopeful about the Freedom Ticket. A lot of it rests on an impression of Richardson himself. Since first meeting him, I've sensed a lot of courage there, as well as an uneasy radicalism. He's one of those tough people who resisted the pressures inflicted on Negro men in the North. He's been in the rat race, and outside of it, and feels effective in both situations. He's easy for people to talk to. He knows that the ghetto respects racial pride and strength; he's willing to push back the Turner people if they get rough. There is no "practical political reason" I can see for him to endorse us publicly; on the contrary, our radicalism would impose a real strain on his coalition. In addition, his is a relatively open organization, one which might become democratic because of popular pressure. Then, too, unless we join him in some way, he may be outside of a political campaign, which most community people are interested in, in our area. The Freedom Ticket will campaign in the areas we've organized, and our possible differences with Richardson would seem pretty incomprehensible to most people. Finally, we probably can run a council candidate of our own, *in a way of our own choosing*, on his ticket this time and in the spring election.[1]

The question is not whether we need political power, but how to create people's power, radical power. How can it be achieved through electoral politics without sapping the roots of the movement here? It may be possible to run a candidate whose own character, as a poor Negro, cannot be fit into the system's routines. The campaign might take shape around the ideas of (1) representation of the black poor and (2) a program determined and advanced by the people affected. If the candidate continued to be primarily a community organizer, acting out his equality with the people, it might have a liberating effect on the thousands of people who don't believe they are qualified to participate in government. Another crucial problem, if he should win, would be that of transforming the office into a community resource: the elected person should be able to carry on with family routines while others represent the community at various functions; regular open meetings should determine how the community's vote is to be cast at council meetings; the officer's salary should go to opening several organizing centers, etc.

1 NCUP finally ran two members for State Assembly on the Freedom Ticket in the November 2 election. The ticket received 10,700 votes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But we must decide soon. But how to do it without splitting NCUP? There seem to be three tendencies: (1) some people want to work with Richardson somehow; (2) some people need time to decide; (3) some people would rather continue regular community organizing. A major problem is finding an organizational formula that allows these different interests to exist without conflict. A second problem is that of the "timetable" in general. In the Richardson campaign, and in anti-poverty and urban renewal as well, there are pressures demanding that you meet the system's timetable or else "miss out." It creates a motive for quick, elitist decisions, followed by a selling campaign among those who were not in the decision-making. The point is that we need *time*, if new orientations are going to root and grow in people. Just possibly, we're far enough along so that people may force decisions to include them. Perhaps Richardson can't get our "manpower" without opening up his organization to people's voices, demands and energy. Maybe. Otherwise where do we go?

WEDNESDAY: Nine o'clock. New reality on 18th Avenue. A traffic cop, four "watch children" signs, and a stop sign at the cross street. People taking notice, talking about it, surprised and a little proud.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK: Talked to friends in New York and Washington about money to pay for food at Newark Conference. People coming from Deep South and Midwest still have to raise their own travel money. Depressing that people can only get together on a national basis by having connections with the existing national organizations. A lot of them are getting to the Newark meeting, though; we expect large numbers from Mississippi in the wake of their mass lobbying for the challenge.

NOON: Downtown to buy back issues of the *Newark News*. Stopped to see Morton Stavis, Newark attorney who is a council to the MFDP, and who always helps out NCUP. He'd been thinking about the Los Angeles thing. He was leaning to the view that the long-run "solution" lies in reconstructing the Negro family (seems to be the Johnson-Humphrey view also). He would do this by a planned, complex program of jobs, changes in the welfare structure, education and other attacks on the generational "cycle" of poverty.

We had a long discussion about it. I said I had no "constructive" alternative to propose, but that his idea might be neither good nor practical. Just whose family structure do they want Negroes to follow? Not mine, I hope. Lyndon Johnson's? The white folks in the suburbs?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The main worry seems to be that Negroes don't have much of a "stake" in the American system. If they can't be fit into American "standard procedures," the argument says, the "pathology" must lie with the Negroes. What they underestimate is the pathology of the society itself: what kind of place is it where most people look at the "Vietcong" (a dirty word in Vietnam vocabulary) the same way that Southern sheriffs look at the movement of "niggers" (a dirty word in the American vocabulary)? What kind of national intelligence is it that contemplates thermonuclear war? It would be a domestic "pacification" program in the "interest" of the American "natives." It would kill the traditional strengths of Negro life from which protest has originated: the ability to take oppression, cooperation to promote survival, a radical understanding of American hypocrisy. Anyway, the most paradoxical thing about this "assimilation" concept, to me, is that the most radical Negro movements have come precisely from those areas of the Black Belt where Negro family life and work are most stable and rooted.

We talked about how some people, like Irving Howe and Bayard Rustin, raise the question of whether Negroes don't have a "right" to become "middle class" instead of being manipulated by radicals. Probably I shouldn't, but I always take this as a defense of middle-class culture masked in the language of civil liberties. The new student organizers can't hide the fact that they are opposed to middle-class life as they have inherited it. Now I certainly would help community people become "middle class," if that meant getting individuals I know jobs or welfare or education. But the system itself usually does that well enough. Primarily, I think we should be overturning the class structure from below, not elevating people into it; changing the quality of work, politics, organizational life, relationships between people. I work with a lot of maids: they are disgusted by the family structure of the people they serve. Maybe a new coalition, of those who have slaved for the middle class and those who were born into it, can figure out a way of creating a freer social structure for everyone.

Stavis and I talked about two different extremes toward which American society might tend in the next few years. As an observer with experience in both the CIO movement of the thirties and the civil rights movement of the sixties, he wants to take a view of gradual progress, racial assimilation, fairer economic distribution. When I hear this I picture an expanded "welfare state" in which plenty of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inequalities remain, but with more cushions and comforts for all. This would mean some kind of new legitimacy, *à la* the AFL-CIO, for the colored minorities, the young people, the students and others currently causing "disorders." It would be, for me, a regimented society, with a still capitalist economy buttressed by a "state planning" sector able better than now to create welfare and pacify conflicts. It would develop the same program, with greater violence, for the "malcontents" in the new countries. Since these tendencies already exist in the U.S., on some days I feel hopelessly sure that the future lies in this direction.

But then I have wondered: this country has mobilized its various interest groups only around foreign wars. Could it mobilize as much on domestic problems such as Civil Rights or Poverty? Or would these issues, by their nature, create a resistance as much as a mobilization, thus paralysing the country's effort to "modernize"? We know that many top government officials and business leaders understand the need for a crusade against racism and poverty, if only to preserve the country's image and reduce disorder (Prudential Insurance people were pushing for that "radical," Kenneth Clark, to come run the Poverty program in Newark). But others at the top disagree, and still others don't care because they do not feel the problem directly. Then, too, the federal or pluralist system itself puts up countless roadblocks against a mobilization directed from Washington.

Should the Great Society fail, the country might go towards the other model: Los Angeles. Perhaps economic and racial divisions are too deep to be healed by Lyndon even with all his allies. Perhaps even the community organizers, even those in SNCC and SDS, are too conservative for the angriest people in this country. Perhaps the only forms of action appropriate to the angry people are violent. Perhaps a small minority, by setting ablaze New York and Washington, could damage this country forever in the court of world public opinion. Sure, American history is amazingly stable, but we always have been a violent people and once before we collapsed into total civil war. Some days when I feel the violence everywhere, or watch City Hall step on someone pointlessly, or see how little support there is for the kind of work we're doing, I expect Los Angeles to happen everywhere, and I wonder, very deep down, where I will be then.

Stavis and I sat for a minute, him with his 30 years and me with my five years of the movement. Then he got a phone call, and went

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

back into his practice. I went back down into the Central Ward, and had a long soda at Bernice's Restaurant on 18th Avenue.

FIVE O'CLOCK: John Barnes, an old Turner associate connected with the Mayor's Human Relations Commission, sauntered down 18th Avenue until he saw me sitting on a porch. Smiling a lot, he said he'd been with the Mayor (he called him by the last name to indicate his independence) that morning, and it was agreed we'd get our traffic light. He was especially worried about what we might do next, and feared conflict between ourselves and Turner people. The man I was with said we would "take Newark apart" unless we got the light, which made Barnes shudder. When Barnes went off, I asked my friend what he thought. "He's a stool pigeon, you can sure tell that," said the man.

Later that night, Sampson called to say that the head of the Human Relations Commission had come right up to his apartment to assure us about the light and find out what we were going to do next. With him, Sampson went on, he brought a young, white married couple, dressed just like "SDS people," but representing the government's anti-poverty program. They asked Sampson and his brother to call a meeting of their neighbors, and said they would be working in the neighborhood for a while to "help people improve themselves." Sampson and his brother politely said no.

I was over at another Avon meeting where people decided to demonstrate in the street on Monday if the City took no action about their traffic problem. When I came back, I bought some hamburger meat and went to a friend's house to cook it. Then Carl Wittman, who works in the next county over, came in from hitchhiking down to Louisiana, over to the Midwest, and back. He went on the trip to see what shape organizing in white communities was in. Said it was "bad," and that he'd decided to keep up his slow work among whites in the next county. "Out of enthusiasm, or doggedness?" I asked. "Doggedness, for sure," he said, and then he drove me back to the apartment.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sargent Shriver

"Maximum feasible participation," as Congress puts it —"participatory democracy," as the Student Movement puts it—is not a new radicalism. It is the old American radicalism, as old as the American Revolution, as old as the idea of self-government.

What then is the contribution of the New Radicals of the Movement of the sixties to the old cause of democracy? First, the words are new. "It's hard to write poetry in a late age," said Gertrude Stein in defending her line about a rose:

> Can't you see that when the language was new—as it was with Chaucer and Homer—the poet could use the name of a thing and the thing was really there? He could say 'o moon' 'o sea' 'o love' and the moon and the sea and love were really there. And can't you see that after hundreds of years have gone by and thousands of poems have been written he could call on those words and find that they were just worn out literary words? . . .

For too long and too often the words "freedom" and "democracy" have been hortatory and honorific. They have been invoked in situations where freedom and democracy were not really there. To many they sound like the worn-out words of worn-out politicians. To others, especially in other parts of the world, they sound suspect, words meant to cover and defend the status quo. So until we have a better slogan, *participation* will do. It raises the old questions in the new contexts, and in both posing and pressing them in a fresh way, the Movement of the sixties has made a significant contribution.

Second, the Movement has helped get a new generation moving. There has been a lot of front-page coverage of the draft card burners —all five or six of them. And considerable attention has been given to marches of protest, or to other direct actions such as the Freedom Rides and the sit-ins. But this is only part of the story. Thousands of students went South last summer to register Negroes, and went into the slums of our cities to tutor children, and volunteered for other community action. 180,000 people have offered to serve in the Peace Corps overseas.

Cutting through ideologies, traditional partisanships and the con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ventional career-pattern that threatens to shape the lives of young people, the Movement—with its slogan, "Don't get hung up!"—has got a substantial number of people moving, and has shown an even larger number that they do not need to be "hung up" forever.

The Movement's third contribution has to do with the *ways* through which participation is possible. Here the picture is more mixed. No one can deny the historic meaning of the Civil Rights protests of the last decade. "Who among us can say," President Johnson asked on the eve of the March to Montgomery, "that we would have made the same progress" without these protests "designed to call attention to injustice, designed to provoke change, designed to stir reform?" Nor can anyone deny that the student revolt at Berkeley has stirred the academic world, to the point where the American Council of Education convened a special meeting on "The Student in Higher Education."

When words get worn out, when conventional political methods prove ineffective, resort to direct action is called for; and as the sit-ins demonstrated, nonviolent direct action is indeed a powerful form of persuasion.

But there is a danger that fascination with the new forms of protest will blind people to the other possibilities and responsibilities of participation. Saying *No* is important, but that is only one dimension of direct action. Just as important are the ways of saying *Yes* effectively. Gandhi always insisted that the other side of the coin of Civil Disobedience was Constructive Service. In between the dramatic campaigns of nonviolent mass action against the British, Gandhi organized his people for personal service and institution-building in the villages and cities of India.

Working in the slums, tutoring children, teaching adults, serving in hospitals or public health projects, organizing community institutions, serving steadily and working hard in community action of all sorts seems dull and not very radical, at least not in the dramatic or explosive sense often associated with the word radicalism. But that is where most of the action is, that is what most of the action must be, if one is concerned with peoples' lives rather than their ideology.

There have been, of course, Freedom Summers of work as well as Freedom Rides. Nevertheless, I think, there is a partial blindness in the Movement. The full rhythm of protest *and* constructive service has not taken hold. For the most part, the Movement sees and gives

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

us only half of Gandhi, and that is not enough.

This blindness is evident in the Movement's international concerns. The Movement's map of the world reminds me of the old cartoon: "A New Yorker's Map of America." Instead of New York looming so large, Berkeley takes first place, and as for the rest of the world, there is Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, and perhaps the Congo, but virtually nothing else. The overseas map might have been drawn by the Pentagon, for it focuses almost entirely on the parts of the world where violence has taken over. One can find very few references in the literature of the New Left to Brazil, Nigeria or India.

This is a strange lapse, when one considers that so much of what the New Left says about Vietnam and the Dominican Republic implies that the present situation in those countries is at least partially attributable to our failure to support the democratic participation and economic and social development of those peoples before the military crisis came.

Despite the apparent preoccupation of the New Radicals with Vietnam, what is by far most important and most promising today is that peaceful changes are taking place in two-thirds of the world. In Vietnam, given present Chinese policies, there may be no satisfactory solution. If anyone thinks he sees one, he should certainly be advancing it, and protesting policies he opposes. But that is not where one's participation in world affairs should end, or even, for most people, begin. The more decisive test of peace and the possibilities of participatory democracy will not come in the few areas where armies are at war; it will come in those countries where war might be prevented.

In 46 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, over 10,000 Peace Corps Volunteers are at work, teaching formally in classrooms and by example in the community. They are teaching, and learning, among other things, a sense of community that goes beyond one's family, religion, race, class or nation. Like those engaged in the politics of direct action at home, Peace Corps Volunteers abroad are demonstrating that people do not need to be hung up by elaborate theories or political dogma or general apathy; that people can cross the cultural frontiers of white and black, East and West, rich and poor, *now*—not in some projected future, but now, in immediate human encounters serving human needs.

Do the New Radicals count these Volunteers out? After seeing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Volunteers in Colombia David Riesman counted them in. "The Peace Corps is no exotic junket, made socially defensible by primarily physical strenuousness," he wrote. "What it does is to put people into positions of awesome and complicated responsibility." Riesman described the "terrifying and illuminating" assignments they had:

> In a society where some people desperately want and need them, while others fear and resent them, they have perforce to become diplomats without portfolio, in a language in which they feel awkward, among customs easily and unknowingly violated. They can take nothing for granted, not the promises of officials, nor the smiles of their co-workers, nor yet their own reaction to occasions of betrayal, dissappointment, or misunderstanding of their work. . . . Many had become self-trained anthropologists in villages whose complicated networks of influence, malice, and rare benevolence no one had mapped yet. . . .

To those who have engaged in community action in the urban or rural slums of America, this will have a familiar ring. The separation of rich and poor is much the same and the consequences are the same, whether frustration at the lack of peaceful change explodes in violence in Vietnam or the Dominican Republic or the district of Watts; whether outsiders are there to compound the trouble or not. If every Communist and Klu Klux Klansman and Black Muslim in the world took a one-way trip to Mars, most of the problems here would remain.

Of course, we can't solve all these problems, but we can help in the development of problem-solving capacity, and the creation of communities, including a world community, in which people participate as self-governing citizens, not as subjects. This would be a victory not for one nation or group of nations, but for the process of persuasion, for the process of peaceful change, for the idea of government by the consent of the governed.

The nineteenth century was less complex—its struggles were defined by front lines and barricades. The network of struggles now is all around us, and enemies and allies are hard to identify.

This is the second area—this matter of identifying one's enemies and allies—where I sense a partial blindness in the New Radicalism. A friend who walked from Selma to Montgomery tells how one of the young leaders of the march said to him: "The Federal Government *is* the *enemy*." That was said while the march proceeded under the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

protection of a Federal court order, with Federal troops alongside and Federal helicopters hovering overhead, with a Presidential appeal being broadcast to the American people.

I do not suggest that radicals, new or old, should embrace any government or any established system. What disappoints me is that leaders of the New Left should view our Establishment as monolithic, when they see so clearly that the establishments of Communism are not monolithic. When people say that the Communist world is no longer a monolith, the New Left agrees. Why cannot it see just as clearly that today the Federal Government is not a monolith blocking peaceful change in America or in the world?

It is not just in Civil Rights that the Federal Government has been an agent of progress. At the White House Conference on Education last spring it became clear that the representatives of the Federal Government were ahead of the Educational Establishment in their thinking and proposals. At a similar White House Conference ten years ago, the reverse was true. But Frank Keppel and others like him made the Federal Government the ally rather than the enemy of progress.

Certainly there are areas within the Federal Government today for those who do not want to be organization men. "We had great responsibilities," concluded a Peace Corps Volunteer who taught in Ethiopia, "to our students, to one another, to ourselves, and in meeting these responsibilities, we found a kind of freedom greater than any we could have imagined."

I am not proposing that the activists of our domestic scene all go overseas in the Peace Corps, or join the Federal bureaucracy. The Government and other parts of the Establishment need people ahead of them. But the New Radicals will not be ahead—they will be left behind, skirmishing with the wrong enemy in the wrong place—if they remain preoccupied with protesting, if they continue to confuse their potential allies with their real enemies, if they continue to ignore those areas of the world where both the need for and the possibility of genuine social advance is great.

I do not want the Movement to become "responsible" in the tired sense of the word—no one wants it to become "sound"—but in the more vigorous meaning that Kennedy gave it: to respond. Or, in the slogan that conveys the spirit and hope of the Movement, but also contains the appropriate warning: "Don't get hung up!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Muriel Spark

DOCTORS OF PHILOSOPHY

ACT ONE

SCENE I

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE:

CHARLIE DELFONT
CATHERINE, *his wife*
LEONORA, *Catherine's cousin*
MRS. S., *the daily help*
DAPHNE, *the Delfont's daughter*
CHARLIE BROWN, *a lorry driver*

It is a summer night.
The DELFONTS *live in a house overlooking the Regent's Canal, and the whole play takes place in the living-room and on the adjoining terrace.*
CHARLIE *is writing at a desk.*
CATHERINE *enters from the terrace, through the French windows.*

CATHERINE: Where's Leonora? . . .
CHARLIE: She's gone to bed.
CATHERINE: I wanted her to come and look at the canal.
CHARLIE: Well, she's gone to bed.
CATHERINE: I thought she might like to look at the water as it isn't term-time. I quite see that during term a thing like the Regent's Canal would be an idea to Leonora, it would be a geographical and historical and sociological idea, but during vacation I do think Leonora ought to take a look at reality. Are you listening, Charlie?
CHARLIE: Yes, Catherine.
CATHERINE: What was I saying?
CHARLIE: Leonora ought to take a look at reality.

Copyright © 1963 by Muriel Spark.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CATHERINE: During the vacation.

CHARLIE: In the vacation.

CATHERINE: That's all I ask. I quite see that when she's in college she can't go and look at a thing without feeling compelled to go and look it up, and consequently she doesn't look at things at all. But in the holidays I feel she ought to take more interest in life.

CHARLIE: The leopard can't change its spots.

CATHERINE: But Leonora isn't a leopard, that's my point. Human beings can change their spots, that's my point. Do you realise, Charlie, that all last term I didn't have a minute to look at the stars. Off to school in the morning, back in the afternoon to see what was going on the house, homework in the evening, coaching the special boys on Saturdays, honestly I haven't looked at the stars.

CHARLIE: You can look at the stars in the holidays and in the term as well from now on.

CATHERINE: I'm not going to give up my job.

CHARLIE: I'm out of pocket with your job. I've always been out of pocket with your jobs. Extra help in the house, extra cigarettes, extra drinks to cheer you up, taxi fares on the days when you have a row with the Head, extra clothes to maintain your authority over the boys. Extra . . .

CATHERINE: Extra ink in my fountain pen. Shoe-leather, you've forgotten shoe-leather.

CHARLIE: Extra shoe-leather. I'm out of pocket.

CATHERINE: If you get your new appointment you'll be able to afford my luxurious job in a grammar school. I have a mind as well as you and Leonora, Charlie.

CHARLIE: You can give free lectures to the Mothers' Union, it would be cheaper in the long run. I can't count on any new appointment.

CATHERINE: When will you know?

CHARLIE: Within a week or two. It's very doubtful. Don't start buying anything, just go on looking at the stars and the canal, I pay for them with the rates.

CATHERINE: Were you thinking of coming to bed or is your time too expensive?

CHARLIE: As to that, perhaps not on the whole. But I've got to finish this tonight, so clear off.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The scene fades out.

It is later in the same evening. CHARLIE *is still at his place.* LEONORA, *wearing a dressing-gown, enters by the door and stands behind* CHARLIE, *who does not look up from his work until she speaks.*

CHARLIE: What's the matter?

LEONORA: It isn't Catherine.

CHARLIE: Oh, it's you, Leonora. What's——

LEONORA: Charlie, give me a child.

CHARLIE: What?

LEONORA: A child, I want a child.

CHARLIE: Which child, what——?

LEONORA: I wish to conceive a child.

CHARLIE: Leonora, are you feeling all right?

LEONORA: No, because I want a child. Before it's too late. I want——

CHARLIE: Leonora. You've been overworking.

The scene fades out.

It is the next morning, and now one sees the room from a different angle, and out, beyond the terrace, to the canal. CHARLIE *and* CATHERINE *are in the room.*

CATHERINE: It is you, Charlie, who've been overworking. I know what it is, you sit there at night and——

CHARLIE: I'm not the imaginative type, Catherine. You are always saying so. Look—I sat there. She stood there——

CATHERINE: Why didn't you call me then, why didn't you wake me up? You're always waking me up to discuss something or other. Why didn't——

CHARLIE: I was stunned. I was embarrassed. I just lay awake and thought about it.

CATHERINE: I think it was a dream. I mean to say, when you think of Leonora, when you just think of Leonora, I mean to say, Charlie. I can't think of Leonora standing here in her nightdress and saying——

CHARLIE: Her dressing-gown. Be perfectly fair.

CATHERINE: After all, if I don't know my own cousin, I mean, Charlie, we grew up together. Leonora's not that type. She's a *born* virgin. I ought to know. One always had to be very careful what one said to Leonora.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHARLIE: That's the dangerous type.

CATHERINE: You've never thought her dangerous before.

CHARLIE: That makes her more dangerous now.

CATHERINE: No-one would believe that a university teacher like Leonora——

CHARLIE: That makes her more dangerous than ever. Remember Sarah Desmond.

CATHERINE: Who?

CHARLIE: Senior lecturer in comparative religions. The author of *The Life Force*. Life. Force. She was discovered in the bath with a wine waiter in a Folkestone hotel. It was hushed up, but she had to resign. What's more they were both naked.

CATHERINE: Leonora doesn't teach the Life Force. Greek is a very different thing from the Life Force, Greek is an old sound subject.

CHARLIE: It comes to the same thing in a woman scholar. Once they break out, they break out.

CATHERINE: I've got as good a degree as Leonora has, and I don't go round inviting men to give me a child.

CHARLIE: You've got a daughter of sorts and you've got a good husband. When will Leonora be back from her walk?

MRS. S. *comes in with a carton from which she lifts various garments as* CHARLIE, *at the same time, places various papers in his brief-case.*

CATHERINE: She's usually back by half past ten. Where are you going? You mustn't leave me alone with her.

MRS. S.: What you want to throw this away for?

CATHERINE: I've finished with it, Mrs. S. You can keep it if you like.

MRS. S.: And what you want to throw this away for?

CHARLIE: I couldn't face her.

CATHERINE: Well, Charlie, neither can I, in a way.

CHARLIE: I'm glad to hear it.

CATHERINE: Although, of course, it's incredible.

MRS. S.: A good vest, what's wrong with it?

CATHERINE: It got shrunk in the laundry.

MRS. S.: It would come in for Daphne. She's filling out.

CATHERINE: She doesn't wear vests. Charlie, you're a rat.

CHARLIE *is putting more things in his brief-case.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MRS. S.: Yes she does. She wears a vest in the winter when she isn't going out with a boy.

CATHERINE: Not her father's vests. Charlie, you aren't going to your club, are you?

CHARLIE: Yes I am, I'm getting out of this till you've sorted things out.

MRS. S.: It'll do nicely for my niece's husband that is to be. It's his build, but of course he's young. But on the other hand, of course, he's fussy, so he might decline. She says he can't have children, I said how does he know if he hasn't had a bash at it? He must have done. She says the doctors can tell. Well you're damn lucky then, I said, in one sense, but you watch out for him in the psychological sense.

CATHERINE: It was going to be my birthday today, Charlie.

CHARLIE: It was your birthday last week.

MRS. S.: Charlie was out of pocket over it, unless my ears deceived me.

CATHERINE: A rat. I was saving up my birthday for Daphne.

CHARLIE: I'll ring you after lunch. Ask her if she's ever walked in her sleep before.

MRS. S.: If they walk in their sleep they don't talk in their sleep. She walked and she talked as far as I've made it my business to gather. It's nerve-wracking, Mrs. D., as between one scholar and another scholar. Charlie's not cut out for it.

CHARLIE *goes out.*

She sits down and points to another chair.

Take a seat. Rest yourself.

CATHERINE: Mrs. S., can you put all those things somewhere out of the way? Daphne will be home before lunch and Mrs. Wood will be here after lunch.

MRS. S.: Oh, Annie Wood's coming, is she? You didn't tell me Annie was coming. Well that puts a different complexion on things, doesn't it? That just about puts the tin hat on it, doesn't it? What you want to invite Annie for?

CATHERINE: She rang and invited herself last night. Mrs. S., would you mind clearing away——?

MRS. S.: Well, you'll have to keep your eye on Charlie. Need I elaborate on the subject?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CATHERINE: I'm not in a sociable mood this morning, Mrs. S., if you don't mind.

MRS. S.: Have a fag. (*She helps herself to a cigarette.*) Annie hasn't got her Ph.D. like you and Leonora, has she?

CATHERINE (*examines a parcel which lies on a table*): What's this parcel?

MRS. S.: Annie hasn't got her Ph.D. and that's enough for me. Charlie wants watching with women that haven't got their Ph.D.'s. They go to his head.

CATHERINE: What's this parcel? It's got 'For Catherine' written on it.

MRS. S.: Go on, open it. It's Leonora's birthday present. You made a mistake, Mrs. D., getting your Ph.D. as a girl and then getting married to another Ph.D. Go on, open it. It's like what they do unnatural among families, the appropriate term escapes me.

CATHERINE: Incest. (*Puts the parcel on top of high book-shelf.*)

MRS. S.: Yes, shocking. And to put the lid on it you send young Daphne away to get done.

LEONORA *comes in.*

With a house full of them, you better watch out for Charlie when Annie comes. He never feels out of pocket with Annie.

LEONORA: Good morning, Catherine.

CATHERINE: Good morning, Leonora.

LEONORA: Good morning, Mrs. S.

MRS. S.: To continue the subject. I wouldn't trust an eleven-plus never mind a Ph.D. Good morning, Leonora. Go and get some coffee while I finish settling the throw-outs with Mrs. D. It's warming up on the stove.

LEONORA *goes out.*

CATHERINE: Well, let's have a look, Mrs. S. Let's just take our time.

MRS. S.: Perhaps as you say we're in a bit of a hurry this morning. I'll leave it for now and go and see what she's doing with the coffee. She might bring it to a boil. Fatal.

CATHERINE: No, stay here. Don't go.

MRS. S. *takes the parcel from the book-case and puts it back on the table.*

MRS. S.: You don't want to hurt Leonora's feelings. Go on, open it.

CATHERINE: No, I'm too busy just now.

MRS. S.: I suppose it's a bed-jacket. It doesn't look like a book, I say

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it doesn't feel like a book, Mrs. D., it feels like a frilly ladies' bed-jacket, or a nightdress. It might be a quilted nylon——

LEONORA *returns with the coffee on a tray.*

MRS. S.: There was iced coffee if you wanted it, but you didn't say. Go on, Mrs. D., open it.

CATHERINE: I'm too busy just now. I'll open it this afternoon when I have my birthday. Did you sleep well, Leonora?

LEONORA: Yes, what's the matter? *(Puts the parcel back on the book-case.)*

MRS. S.: I'll take this lot out of the way.

CATHERINE: No, Mrs. S., I always like to make time for you during the holidays and show consideration. Leonora, Mrs. S. and I have been having a deep chat. Daphne will be here before lunch. Annie's coming today, did I tell you Annie was coming, Leonora? Charlie had to rush off for some reason. Mrs. S. has discovered a delightful vest amongst these old clothes.

MRS. S. *places the carton aside.*

MRS. S.: Oh no, Mrs. D., oh no. If you're going to come to a climax, this is no place for me. After six years going on seven in an academic household I've learned to preserve my detachment and scholarly calm on the other side of the door. *(Goes out.)*

LEONORA: Want some?

CATHERINE: Yes, if it's hot.

LEONORA *gives* CATHERINE *her coffee and opens the newspaper.* Of course, Leonora, the news is vitally absorbing today. I've only had time to look at the headlines myself, but they look too exciting for words — 'Three Turkish Leaders Arrested', 'I Withdraw Ban, says Bishop', 'Car Crash Death Toll', 'Warning to West'. Whatever shall we be hearing next?

LEONORA: What's wrong?

CATHERINE: Nothing. I feel a bit intense because it's my birthday. Shifting it from last week to this was a great mistake.

LEONORA: There's a little something from me in that parcel up there.

CATHERINE: I'm going to open it later, Leonora, when I've more time to enjoy the surprise. I thought it would be nice when Daphne comes and we can cut the cake. Annie's coming too. Did you know Annie was coming?

LEONORA: Yes, I took the telephone call last night.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CATHERINE: So you did. We'll be quite a family, Leonora. Did you happen to hear a noise in the night by any chance?

LEONORA: No, why? Have you been burgled?

CATHERINE: Oh, I forgot actually to thank you for your present, Leonora. I mean, of course I intend to thank you properly when I open it. But thank you now, in advance. Thank you very much indeed, it's sweet of you to remember. Charlie had to rush off, what a pity.

LEONORA: Pull yourself together, Catherine.

CATHERINE: I think I'm more together than you are. Were you disturbed by anything at ten past one this morning? Did you get up for any reason?

LEONORA: No. Why?

CATHERINE: Charlie fell asleep at his work. He had a peculiar dream, a dream.

LEONORA: What makes you think I would be disturbed by Charlie's dreams? Did he call out?

CATHERINE: No, he didn't. That's what I can't make out, because you entered into his dream.

LEONORA: I'm not responsible for Charlie's dreams.

CATHERINE: He was accosted. I thought perhaps it might not have been a dream. But I see now that it was a dream. I apologise.

LEONORA: I accept your apology.

CATHERINE: It seems odd that you should accept an apology for an offence of which you don't know the nature or the details.

LEONORA: I can imagine the nature and the details.

CATHERINE: It must console you in the absence of the reality.

LEONORA: Catherine, do you think I've never had an opportunity to sleep with a man?

CATHERINE: Not for a long time.

LEONORA: Why do you think so?

CATHERINE: Because of your manner and expression.

LEONORA: You're in no position to judge on that point. Obviously, my manner and expression would be very different if I were about to sleep with a man from what they are sitting here drinking warmed-up coffee with you.

CATHERINE: A woman of opportunities wears a certain manner and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expression all the time, Leonora. I don't say you look your age, it's just the manner and——

LEONORA: I'm not yet old enough to look my age. I could still bear a child.

CATHERINE: I see.

LEONORA: If I should wish to do so.

CATHERINE: You need more than the wish.

LEONORA: I'm speaking theoretically.

CATHERINE: So am I, because you would need the man. Or a test tube if you didn't want to change your manner and expression.

LEONORA: I think you're absolutely vile.

MRS. S. *comes in to remove the tray.*

MRS. S.: Flowers for Annie. How long's Annie going to stop for? My feet won't stand it. I hope this is the last lot that comes to the door.

CATHERINE: A fortnight I expect.

MRS. S.: She'll be out on the canal with Charlie, wait and see. Dressed in her clothes. He'll linger out there with her all afternoon, showing a bad example.

CATHERINE: He can linger all night with her if he likes.

MRS. S.: How long's Leonora going to stop for?

LEONORA: I'm leaving right away, Mrs. S.

CATHERINE: No, Leonora, you are not leaving right away. I'm upset.

MRS. S.: Let me know when you've worked it out because of the lunch. *(Goes out.)*

CATHERINE: You mustn't leave, Leonora. I apologise.

LEONORA: I reject your apology.

CATHERINE: Did you come down here in the night and ask Charlie to give you a child?

LEONORA: No.

CATHERINE: He says you did.

LEONORA: He must have had a dream. It's very sensational. I crave to hear more.

CATHERINE: Leonora, sometimes you bring out the very worst in me.

LEONORA: I think you must be right.

CATHERINE: Charlie is convinced that it happened. He thinks you must be suffering from a nervous disorder. It was embarrassing for Charlie.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LEONORA: It's embarrassing for me.

MRS. S. (*putting her head round the door*): Daphne's boy friend on the 'phone. Coming this afternoon.

CATHERINE: Did he want to speak to me?

MRS. S.: No, he wanted not to speak to you. *(Withdraws.)*

CATHERINE: Daphne's boy friend is rather shy. He's called Charlie and we call him young Charlie to distinguish him from Charlie.

LEONORA: What does he do?

CATHERINE: Nuclear physics. He's just finished his post-graduate course and got a job, it's very hush-hush.

LEONORA: Is it a serious affair?

CATHERINE: I incline to think so. There have been several. But of course she must wait till she's got her degree.

LEONORA: That would be a pity. She ought to get married soon.

CATHERINE: You spoke very differently when I got married to Charlie. You opposed it.

LEONORA: You were a first-rate scholar. Daphne is no scholar at all. If she's in love with the man, she'll have a settled married life. She might take a job in a grammar school. There will be no conflict, as there is in your case.

CATHERINE: I have a satisfactory married life as married lives go. You know nothing of married life.

LEONORA: What about your intellectual life?

CATHERINE: It's satisfied by teaching at the Grammar School.

LEONORA: I don't believe it.

CATHERINE: Why not?

LEONORA: When you come up to visit me in college you have a hankering look. I feel sorry for you at those times. I think perhaps it stabs you — the knowledge that you had it in you to become a distinguished scholar — and have become merely the mother of an average student and the wife of a second-class scholar.

CATHERINE: You needn't feel sorry for me. Charlie's one of the best economists in the country.

LEONORA: That doesn't prove him to be a first-class one.

CATHERINE: Your standards were always too high, Leonora. Reality forces one to lower one's standards. In your remote life you know nothing of reality.

LEONORA: I think you hanker after my remote life. I think you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

desire a form of reality where your standards can be high without discomfort.

CATHERINE: I might return to scholarship one day.

LEONORA: After all these years? A scholar needs continuity, Catherine.

CATHERINE: I haven't been entirely idle for all these years. I could pick up the threads if I should wish.

LEONORA: You need more than the wish, you need the capacity.

CATHERINE: What makes you think I haven't got the capacity?

LEONORA: Your manner and expression.

CATHERINE: If I sat down to study a subject, Leonora, I would have a studious look. Naturally I don't look the scholar when I'm running the house and running Charlie and correcting the fourth-form homework.

LEONORA: A woman of intellectual capacity has a certain manner and expression all the time. They are the manner and expression of detachment, and you can't pick them up overnight.

CATHERINE: I wouldn't want to pick them up at all. I like to please men. Do you think it pleases a man when he looks into a woman's eyes and sees a reflection of the British Museum Reading Room? I don't envy your expression and your manner.

LEONORA: I think you do. Sometimes you look at me like a jealous woman.

CATHERINE: That's a curious observation, considering you are so detached. In fact, I only want to know what makes you tick when I look at you.

LEONORA: What conclusion have you reached?

CATHERINE: That you're in love with something without needing it to love you back. That's how you look and act. Sometimes it's terrifying.

LEONORA: And sometimes fascinating.

CATHERINE: Yes . . . of course I'm attached to you. Don't you get tired of practising detachment?

LEONORA: I admit sometimes I get tired of being treated as a scholar and a gentleman.

CATHERINE: You ought to have got married, Leonora, if only for the pleasure of pleasing a man. Hundreds of women academics are married these days. They teach in the universities, run their homes,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have babies, write books and feed their husbands — I don't know how they do it all.

LEONORA: I know how they do it all.

CATHERINE: How?

LEONORA: Badly.

MRS. S. *comes in.*

MRS. S.: You got nothing done this morning, Mrs. D. It's always the same in the holidays when Leonora's here, you sit arguing the toss and nothing gets done.

CATHERINE: In our way, we've been making progress, Mrs. S.

MRS. S.: In my way, I've been making the beds, Mrs. D.

LEONORA: I made my bed.

MRS. S.: You didn't.

LEONORA: Didn't I? How very odd. I usually do.

CATHERINE: Perhaps you were a bit distracted this morning, Leonora?

MRS. S.: Back to where we started. You better do something.

CATHERINE: What do you want me to do? I don't feel up to much. Leonora, why did you forget to make your bed?

LEONORA: I have no idea. I'm only an absent-minded professor. You could open my parcel, Catherine, if you want something to do.

CATHERINE: I'm saving it till this afternoon.

MRS. S.: Go on. Open it and get it over. *(Gets down the parcel.)*

CATHERINE: Can I trust you, Leonora?

LEONORA: What do you mean?

CATHERINE: Is it something insulting?

LEONORA: No.

CATHERINE: Mrs. S., where are the scissors?

LEONORA: Untie it. It's easy.

CATHERINE: I want scissors. Kindly allow me to organise my own home in my own way. Mrs. S.—scissors, please.

MRS. S.: They'll need finding. (*Goes out.*)

LEONORA: The situation between us is very unhealthy, Catherine.

CATHERINE: What do you mean?

LEONORA: I mean that you're so anxious about my present. I've never given you an insulting present. Really, I must leave this house.

CATHERINE: No, Leonora. I don't want you to go. I'm upset.

MRS. S. *comes in with scissors.*

It's so exciting, opening a parcel.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MRS. S.: Think it was a bomb, the way you was going on. I suppose it's a bed-jacket. Now take it easy, Mrs. D.

CATHERINE (*holds up nightdress*): It's a nightdress. A beautiful transparent feminine honeymoon nightdress.

MRS. S.: That's torn it. Take a seat, Mrs. D.

LEONORA: If you don't like it, I'll keep it for myself and buy you something else.

CATHERINE: A sexy little, seductive little . . . Thank you, Leonora. You always give me something suitable for bed. Well, I suppose one spends a lot of one's life in bed, so it's quite a good idea. Nobody ever gives me a book, for instance, because it wouldn't be sensible. They know very well I haven't got time to read any book, except classics prescribed for the fourth form, even if I had the capacity to read one. I suppose you realise, Leonora, that if I had cared to make a career of scholarship I would have been a far better palaeographist than you are a classicist.

MRS. S.: Leonora, if you done this on purpose, you'll get a judgment on you.

LEONORA: Catherine, I'm appalled. Tell me what book you would like to have and give me back the nightdress. It's the sort of thing I like to wear myself.

CATHERINE (*tossing the nightdress on top of the box of old clothes*): You may add it to your niece's trousseau, Mrs. S.

MRS. S.: There's a way to give, Mrs. D., and a way not to give. However, I make allowance for the conflict raging at present within you between your Ph.D. that was and the nuptial significance of the nightie in question.

LEONORA: This is a pathetic fuss, Catherine. I didn't realise you were quite so touchy on the subject. You should have a holiday.

CATHERINE: I should never have got married, Leonora. You were right. It was a mistake.

LEONORA: You could not have stood a celibate life. You would always have been divided.

CATHERINE: I'll tell you where I made the mistake. Marriage — yes. But I shouldn't have married into the academic world. Can you imagine what it has felt like, as a scholar, to be the mere chattel of another scholar for all these years?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LEONORA: You exaggerate. Charlie doesn't treat you like a chattel. You've had a very pleasant life.

CATHERINE: I shouldn't have married Charlie. In some ways it was unfair to Charlie. I should have married a stockbroker. I should have married a bank manager, or a butcher or a baker. I had to have my sex, and my child, but I should have married someone who wouldn't eat up my brain, my mind. I should have married an electrician, a plumber. I should have married a hulking great LORRY DRIVER.

Enter DAPHNE *followed by* CHARLIE BROWN, *hulking great lorry driver.*

DAPHNE: Hallo, Mother. I got a lift on a lorry. I've asked the driver in for a cup of tea.

CATHERINE: Oh!

DAPHNE: Let me introduce . . . what's your name?

CHARLIE B.: Just call me Charlie, we're all called Charlie.

DAPHNE: Mother, Leonora, this is Charlie. Where's Mrs. S.? We want a cup of tea, don't we, Charlie?

CHARLIE B.: Lot a books you got.

CATHERINE: Perhaps Charlie would be more comfortable in the kitchen with Mrs. S. She has tea brewing all day long.

DAPHNE: Certainly not. Sit down, Charlie. I'm very grateful to Charlie, he's saved me a train journey, not to mention the fare, and given me a most amusing morning. Charlie, do tell that story about the professor's wife you gave a lift to who made a pass at you. I'll go and get you some of Mrs. S.'s tea. Does anyone else want some? *(Exit.)*

LEONORA: Not on top of that foul coffee.

CATHERINE: We shall try to improve our standards in future.

CHARLIE B.: You got a guest house here?

CATHERINE: More or less.

CHARLIE B.: Lot of books you got. I got a book at home, might interest you.

LEONORA: Goodness, the time! I have to be off.

CATHERINE: Leonora, you're not leaving?

LEONORA: I'm only going to the British Museum.

CATHERINE: What are you doing at the British Museum?

LEONORA: Research.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAPHNE *comes in with* CHARLIE BROWN'S *tea.*

DAPHNE: Charlie, it's my mother's birthday today. Actually it was last week but we decided to hold it today. She doesn't look her age, does she?

CHARLIE B.: No. (*To* CATHERINE) You must a been a nice-looking woman.

DAPHNE: I've got a present for you in my case, Mother.

CATHERINE: What sort of research are you doing, Leonora?

LEONORA: Assyrian palaeography. I have to be off——

CATHERINE: But that was my subject. It was my subject.

LEONORA: You didn't exhaust it. I've been doing this for two years, I'm writing a short book — only a monograph.

CATHERINE: I don't see why you can't stick to Greek. I don't see why you want to dabble in my subject.

Exit LEONORA.

I'll leave you to look after Charlie. I've got nothing done this morning. Perhaps Charlie needs to be off, if he's had his tea.

CHARLIE B.: No, I'm not in any hurry. Plenty time.

MRS. S. *comes in.*

MRS. S.: You go and unpack your things, Daphne.

DAPHNE: Thanks for the lift, Charlie, anyhow. (*Exit.*)

MRS. S.: You finished your tea?

CHARLIE B.: Yes thanks.

MRS. S.: Well I better clear away, then. It's gone twelve — I suppose you want to be off.

CHARLIE B.: No, I'm in no hurry. If it isn't your own time you might as well relax. Lot a books. Have they read them all?

MRS. S.: They don't use them for reading, they are educated people, they refer to them. You better get off. The old father might come in and find you.

CHARLIE B.: Oh, I'm used to that. Funny sort of guest house, this.

MRS S.: 'This is the home, situated near Regent's Park, of the celebrated economist, Charles Delfont and his charming wife and daughter who is at present doing a post-graduate course in sociology at Oxford. Mrs. Delfont, before her marriage a scholar in her own right, told *Life and Looks* that she has found it perfectly easy to reconcile her capacity for intellectualism with the duties of wife and mother. "After all," she said with a serene smile, "higher education

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

broadens the horizons, and is especially helpful to married relations when one's husband is also a bit of an egg-head." At present she has a job — teaching boys in a grammar school. "It helps to keep the pot boiling," said Mrs. Delfont, an eminently practical woman in spite of her learned background.'

CHARLIE B.: I don't follow your drift.

MRS. S.: It was all in *Life and Looks* journal.

CHARLIE B.: Remarkable memory you got.

MRS. S.: If you'd a been here the day that *Life and Looks* came for the interview you'd a remembered it too. I been here six years. It's been an education in itself. Nice people. No television.

CHARLIE B.: Bit unnatural, that.

MRS. S.: They don't take no notice of natural and unnatural. Experienced people. They get a bit Freudian at times, of course, but it all comes out in the wash. Now you get out of here quick. Annie's coming this afternoon.

CHARLIE B.: Who?

MRS. S.: Cousin Annie.

CHARLIE B.: That's funny. I got a sister called Annie.

MRS. S.: Our Annie is a person of means, of glamour and also of democratic instincts.

CHARLIE B.: I'll keep that in mind. Ta-ta.

MRS. S.: Au revoir.

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leslie A. Fiedler

AN AMERICAN ABROAD

It is now nearly a hundred years since Mark Twain embarked on "the first organized pleasure party ever assembled for a transatlantic voyage," and began making the notes which were to become that occasionally mad, often tedious, but somehow eminently satisfactory travel book, *The Innocents Abroad or the New Pilgrim's Progress: Being Some Account of the Steamship QUAKER CITY'S Pleasure Excursion to Europe and the Holy Land.* A century later, we find it perfectly natural that Twain should have been present as a kind of laureate *ex-officio* to the initiation of mass tourism in the United States—his way, to the tune of $1250, paid by a California newspaper; for we know now that with the publication of his *New Pilgrim's Progress,* he was launching a literary career marked by an almost obsessive concern with Europe and the quest for American identity.

No one, however, had any sense of this on June 8, 1867, when the "Quaker City" sailed, since—though Twain had already done some newspaper pieces about a voyage to Hawaii—his sole published volume, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog and Other Sketches,* suggested an exclusive concern with quite other, much more parochial material. Yet, over and over, he was to return to the themes of *The Innocents Abroad*: not only in other self-declared travel books like *A Tramp Abroad* or *Following the Equator,* but in such fictions as *The Prince and the Pauper, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, Tom Sawyer Abroad, The Mysterious Stranger.* Even in his greatest work, *Huckleberry Finn,* the encounter with Europe is represented, despite the exclusively American scene, in the ill-fated meeting between Jim and Huck, on the one hand, and the Duke and the Dauphin, on the other. To be sure, those two self-styled Europeans are arrant frauds; but precisely in so far as they are fraudulent, they embody what Twain took to be the essential nature of Old World aristocracy. "What was the use to tell him these warn't real Kings and Dukes?" Huck asks himself at one point just before falling asleep, and answers himself, "It wouldn't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a done no good; and besides, it was just as I said; you couldn't tell them from the real kind."

At any rate, Twain's participation in the excursion seems to have been more suffered than welcomed, the representatives of the Plymouth Church (apparently the moving spirit behind the whole enterprise) preferring to advertise such better known prospective passengers as Henry Ward Beecher and General Sherman, neither of whom finally went along. Mark Twain, however, was there on schedule, along with "three ministers of the gospel, eight doctors, sixteen or eighteen ladies, several military and naval chieftains," and other similarly undistinguished but pious fellow-adventurers. "The whole affair," Bret Harte was acute enough to point out in 1870, "was a huge practical joke, of which not the least amusing feature was the fact that 'Mark Twain' had embarked on it." Yet that joke eventuated in a classic work which, without ceasing to be amusing, marks a critical point in the development of our literature, and especially in our attempt through literature to find out who we Americans are.

We have always been aware that ours is a country which has had to be invented as well as discovered: invented even before its discovery (as Atlantis, Ultima Thule, a western world beyond the waves), and reinvented again and again both by the European imagination—from, say, Chateaubriand to D. H. Lawrence or Graham Greene—and by the deep fantasy of its own people, once these existed in fact. And before Chateaubriand, Shakespeare—inspired by accounts of a voyage to the Bahamas—had sketched his own vision of the New World as Prospero's island; and had even evoked an image of its aboriginal inhabitants in that "brave monster," Caliban (his name an anagram of cannibal), chanting his New Song under the influence of Old World liquor: "Freedom, hi-day! Hi-day, freedom! Freedom! Hi-day, freedom!" Europeans, however, begin always with their own world, the Old World, as *given;* and define the New World in contrast to it, as nature versus culture, the naïve versus the sophisticated, the primitive versus the artificial. We Americans, on the other hand, are plagued by the need to invent a mythological version of Europe first, something against which we can then define ourselves; since for us neither the Old nor the New World seems ever given, and we tend to see ourselves not directly but reflexively: as the Other's Other. Only when the two worlds become one, as they seem now on the verge of doing, will Europeans and Americans alike be delivered from the obligation of writing "travel books" about each other, i.e., books whose chief point is to define our archetypal differences and prepare for our historical assimilation.

In the past, certainly, most American writers have, either in avowed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fictions or presumed factual accounts, created myths of the two worlds and their relationship; from Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, through Poe and Hawthorne and Melville to James and Hemingway, Eliot and Pound, scarcely any of our major authors has failed to face up to this task. Those few who have rejected it—Thoreau and Whitman come first to mind—have felt their refusal in itself as somehow heroic, and if not quite a sufficient *raison d'être,* at least a satisfactory *raison d'écrire.* For a long time, however, the general American obligation to accommodate to each other the myths of Europeans and ex-Europeans was oddly parochialized by being entrusted to the small group of highly educated White Anglo-Saxon Protestants from a few Atlantic seaboard cities, who remained for decades the sole public spokesmen of the United States.

It was that group, in any case, who first undertook the archetypal voyage to Europe (Dr. Franklin, in his disguise as a good, grey Quaker, being the mythological forerunner of them all), defining it in letters, articles and books as simultaneously a Descent into Hell and an Ascent to Olympus. The inferno into which the earlier travelers thought of themselves as descending was the Hell of surviving Medievalism, which is to say, of oppression, class distinction, "immorality" (belated vestiges of Courtly Love) and, especially, Roman Catholicism; while the Olympian heights they fancied themselves as scaling were represented by the preserved monuments of antiquity, the reconstructed cathedrals of the Middle Ages and the artistic achievements of the Renaissance as displayed in museums. Unfortunately for their peace of mind, the works of art which such WASP travelers admired to the point almost of worship were hopelessly involved with the values, religious and political, which such travelers most despised. The benign culture-religion into which the faith of their mothers was, by slow and imperceptible degrees, lapsing came into inescapable conflict with the violent anti-Catholicism to which the fiercer faith of their fathers had, just as gradually, shrunk. And though they did not often confess the dis-ease bred by that conflict, they were surely troubled by it.

A little later, their direct descendants, Henry James and Henry Adams, were to suggest a solution, fully achieved only later still by their remoter heirs, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound (in whom anti-Semitism tended anyhow to replace anti-Catholicism): the total abandonment of the negative vestiges of Protestantism in favor of the culture-religion and whatever fashionable cults were best adapted to it. But so drastic an accommodation was achieved only at the risk of expatriation and apostasy, which is to say, the surrender of essential "Americanism," as defined in the WASP tradition. How different the Old World was to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

look to such recusant Puritans, only the twentieth century was able to reveal; yet that century revealed, too, how like one half of the older view, at least, their revision of it remained.

One need only to contrast their point of view with the versions of Europe and Americans in Europe produced by the quite different kinds of writer to whom the task of reinventing the two worlds was transferred in the new century: with those birthright Roman Catholics, for instance, like F. Scott Fitzgerald in *Tender is the Night;* or with those post-Jamesian urban Jews, like H. J. Kaplan in *The Plenipotentiaries,* or Bernard Malamud in his Italian stories. Kaplan's novel is almost forgotten these days; but it is well to remember what a revolutionary reordering of old concepts was involved in the creation of his post-World War II Americans, Jews and philo-Semites in whose head the old anti-Semitic tags out of Eliot ("Burbank with a Baedeker, Bleistein with a cigar") echoed with new ironies as they regarded their fellow tourists in Paris. And it is apt, too, that in his extraordinary short story, "The Mohammedans," Kaplan let us look for the first time, through the eyes of precisely such a latter-day expatriate returned to Chicago, at those Black Muslim who so possess our imaginations now.

The ultimate contrast, however, is with myths of Americans abroad imagined by those absolutely non-European Americans, the Negroes, best represented, perhaps, by James Baldwin in his novel, *Giovanni's Room* or his pioneering essay, "A Stranger in the Village." We have had to travel far, indeed, on a journey for which the only maps are precisely the books we have been discussing, to get from the Old World of Irving or Longfellow or Hawthorne or Melville, even of James or Eliot, to stand in the Europe Baldwin experiences and overhear his musing, as he watches a group of Swiss villagers: "the most illiterate among them is related in a way I am not to Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo . . . . the Cathedral of Chartres says to them what it cannot say to me. . . ."

But this is also true of the most illiterate among the Western Americans of the mid-nineteenth century, in whose name Mark Twain pretended to speak; for Twain represents merely the other side of the old WASP ambivalence, its secular Puritanism: that fear of High Art and High Church worship which the followers of Henry Adams had rejected in favor of the religion of Art. Twain may refuse the Virgin and choose the Dynamo, but he remains immeasureably closer to the first American travelers in Europe than any latter-day American Catholic or Negro or Jew. Whatever sense of alienation he may feel from Dante, Shakespeare and Michelangelo, to Shakespeare at least he is bound by a kinship of blood and tradition he can never quite disavow. To be sure, his relationship to Michelangelo is more than a little ambivalent, for Michel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

angelo was a Mediterranean and a lackey of Cardinals and Popes. "I used to worship the great genius of Michael Angelo," he tells us, ". . . but I do not want Michael Angelo for breakfast—for luncheon—for dinner—for tea. . . . I never felt so fervently thankful, so soothed, so tranquil, so filled with a blessed peace, as I did yesterday when I learned that Michael Angelo was dead."

Yet even here, Twain's is no more the utterly alienated view of James Baldwin than it is, say, the tormentedly involved response of a second-generation Italo-American, the son of an illiterate peasant from the Abruzzi who has grown rich and returns to confront the world his father had fled. Twain stands on precisely the Protestant Anglo-Saxon middle ground, from which Mediterranean Europe was being surveyed in his time by such more genteel exploiters of experience abroad as William Dean Howells and Bayard Taylor. As a matter of fact, by the time Twain was beginning to write, Taylor himself had decided that Europe was pretty well used up as a literary subject; and in *By-Ways of Europe* (a book about spots off the main lines of travel, published in the same year as *The Innocents Abroad*), had vowed that he would produce no more such essays. Twain, however, being the spokesman for the lowbrow tourism which succeeded the upper middlebrow variety in whose name Taylor had written, follows the old routes with no sense that they have suffered from literary overexposure, or that, indeed, there are any others.

He was, to be sure, the prisoner of a tour plan laid out by organizers for whom the world worth seeing had been defined once and for all by the genteel essayists of the generations before, and the writers of guide books, who were their degenerate heirs; but he, who protested so much else, does not protest the limits thus imposed on him. Bret Harte, in his otherwise extremely laudatory review, complains of precisely this, "Yet, with all his independence, 'Mark Twain' seems to have followed his guide and guide-books with a simple, unconscious fidelity. He was quite content to see only that which everybody else sees, even if he was not content to see it with the same eyes. . . ." In one sense, the case can be made even stronger; for more often than anyone seems ever quite to remember Twain saw those "same sights" with exactly the "same eyes" as those who had gone the same route before him.

He shares especially the bad taste of his generation and its immediate predecessors: admiring extravagantly, for instance, the mediocre Cathedral of Milan ("a poem in marble"), the gross funeral statuary in the cemetery of Genoa, the inferior sculptures exhumed at Pompeii, and even—despite his general contempt for "old paintings"—the Guido Reni "Saint Michael Conquering the Dragon," which the pale heroine

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* had also overesteemed. ". . . She has studied and admired few pictures so much as this . . . ," her lover explains midway through the novel; and adds, "No wonder; for there is hardly another so beautiful in the world." All of which is fair enough, since that lover and the pale heroine had sung in concert not long before, as they stood over the ruins of the Roman forum, "Hail Columbia!" Just as Twain shares the esthetics of the genteel tourists who preceeded him, he shares also their sentimental-hypocritical politics and morality: combining a theoretical hated of royalty, for instance, with an actual willingness to submit to the charms of emperors, if they are efficient (like Louis Napoleon) or kind to their pretty young daughters (like the Czar of all the Russias); and complementing a theoretical abhorrence for European frankness about sex with an actual eagerness for seeking out occasions to put that abhorrence to work.

Like many of the contemporaries he affected to despise, he wants to have it both ways—to attend unashamedly a performance of the Can-Can ("I placed my hands before my face for very shame. But I looked through my fingers"), but to be morally offended at the presence beside him of "staid, respectable, aged people. ("There were a good many such people present. I suppose French morality is not of that strait-laced description which is shocked at trifles.") As long as it is understood that sex is for the consumption of men only, and especially of young bachelors, Twain is not morally troubled. He even manages to admire certain pictures "which no pen could have the hardihood to describe," drawn on the walls of what he calls delicately "the only building in Pompeii which no woman is allowed to enter"; and barely manages to work up, in a dutiful climax, a vision of the wrath of Heaven being visited upon its long-dead clients.

Only when sex threatens the purity of women, or, more precisely, I suppose, of ladies, is his Puritan indignation genuinely stirred; and that indignation is doubled, of course, when a Churchman is involved in the dubious proceedings. Surely, one of the most extraordinary passages in *The Innocents Abroad* (the feeling invoked absurdly out of proportion with the declared occasion) is the long digression on the seduction of Eloise by Abelard and the consequent decline of Abelard's fortunes. With what prurient relish Twain recounts the disasters which overwhelmed "the dastardly Abelard," summing up his downfall finally with that Protestant, bourgeois, American phrase of utter contempt: "He died a nobody. . . ." But on the way to that climax, he pauses to linger with especial pleasure over Abelard's castration, which he does not name, falling back on a quotation from an anonymous "historian" to hint at it: " 'Ruffians, hired by Fulbert, fell upon Abelard by night, and inflicted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon him a terrible and nameless mutilation.'" To which Twain adds: "I am seeking the last resting-place of those 'ruffians.' When I find it I shall shed some tears on it . . . and cart away from it some gravel whereby to remember that howsoever besotted by crime their lives may have been, those ruffians did one just deed. . . ." Perhaps it is especially virulent in the South, this eagerness to dwell on the violation of women and to dream (sometimes to act out) the castration of their violators. One recalls, for instance, the statement of Nat Harris, a governor of Georgia, trying in 1915 to explain to the correspondent of the *New York Times* the motive of the lynch mob that had hanged Leo Frank, a young Jew falsely convicted of murdering a young girl:

> . . . in the first place, there is something that unbalances men here in the South where women are concerned. I won't call it chivalry, or call it anything; it is, if you like, something that destroys a man's ability and even willingness to do cold and exact justice. That is the way it is in the South; it cannot be argued against, and must be accepted as a fact. If a woman is the victim of a crime, a fury seizes men.

To the Southerner, aware of himself as more WASP than any other American, the Mediterranean European, like the Jew or the Negro, seems less than human in his failure to share this chivalric rage; and Twain is, in this sense at least, essentially a Southerner.

The notion of an adulterous passion committed and generous enough to be redemptive seems to Twain only "nauseous sentimentality"; for he is as immune to the continental tradition of Courtly Love as any Anglo-American lady novelist. Even in its most attenuated and spiritualized form, as celebrated for instance in the poems of Petrarch to Laura, the Medieval love code finds no sympathetic response in Twain, who only cries by way of protest, "Who glorifies poor Mr. Laura?" Not that he ever blames the young ladies involved, considering them by definition innocent victims. "I have not a word to say against the misused, faithful girl," he comments of Eloise herself, taking her side as instinctively as Harriet Beecher Stowe had taken that of Mrs. Byron, in an article printed in the very issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* in which Howells had reviewed Twain's travel book; for, like Mrs. Stowe, Mark Twain believed that a "reverence for pure womanhood is . . . a national characteristic of the American. . . ."

Certainly, it was a characteristic of those genteel vestigial Puritans to whose company Twain aspired; and whenever he found a living example of that "pure womanhood" ready to hand—as he did in Mary Mason Fairbanks aboard the "Quaker City," he submitted to her censorship in an act of guilt-ridden hypocrisy, which he apparently took for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

virtue. "I was never what she thought me," he wrote on the occasion of "Mother" Fairbanks' death in 1899, "but I was glad to seem to her to be it." Such submission to conscience as embodied in a surrogate mamma of genteel taste and sentimental Christian principles appeared to Twain, at any rate, a way into the cultured WASP world; and this conviction seemed to him justified when the book which had taken final shape under Mrs. Fairbanks' supervision was hailed by William Dean Howells, spokesman-in-chief for that world.

His spontaneous expression of pleasure at that review is, however, a giveaway, not only in its unguarded vulgarity, but in the implications of its metaphor. He had felt reading it, Twain said, like the woman whose baby had come white; and, indeed, with the acceptance of *The Innocents Abroad,* he had been accepted as fully "white," in the sense that the Anglo-Saxon first settlers of America had given that mythological adjective, "white," that is to say, not merely by virtue of not being a "nigger," which was good enough at home—but by virtue of having attained a certain level of culture as the New England Brahmins demanded.

But he was not, finally, quite one of them, as was to become embarrassingly evident to his genteel defenders at the infamous Whittier Birthday Dinner, a decade or so after his voyage on the "Quaker City." Confronting what Stuart P. Sherman would still be able to call as late as 1910, "the leading geniuses of New England," i.e., the most proper literary Bostonians, Twain told into the "black frost" of their disapproval an utterly irreverent, pseudo-Western yarn involving "Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Emerson, Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes—consound the lot. . . ." Why Longfellow himself was not "melted down" by the irreverent miner who in Twain's tale cried out, "Hiawatha, if you'll be so kind as to hold your yawp for about five minutes and let me get this grub ready, you'll do me proud," he could not fathom. Three decades later he was still protesting, "It is just as good as it can be. It is smart. It is saturated with humor . . . what could have been the matter with that house?" Twain was never able really to understand why his homely anecdote had failed to tickle his auditors; but Mr. Sherman, last apologist for the values he had unwittingly challenged, is in no doubt. "I know very well," he asserts, "that Congreve or Addison or George Meredith would have agreed . . . that Mark Twain's reminiscence was a piece of crude, heavy intellectual horseplay—an impudent affront offered to Puritan aristocracy by a rough-handed plebian jester from Missouri." So, too, would Twain's wife, as he acknowledged in a letter of apology to Longfellow. "As to my wife's distress, it is not to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

measured; for she is of finer stuff than I; and yours were sacred names to her."

But why, Twain must have wondered, was his Whittier's Birthday speech rejected by the sort of men who had accepted his European travel book, much of which was precisely the same sort of "crude, heavy, intellectual horseplay," presented through exactly the same sort of *persona,* "a rough-handed plebian jester from Missouri." Stuart Sherman himself, as a matter of fact, is quite as ready to condemn the book as the speech, and on similar grounds: "The Mississippi pilot, homely, naïve, arrogantly conceited . . . turns the Old World into a laughing stock by shearing it of its humanity—simply because there is nothing in him to respond to the glory that was Greece, to the grandeur that was Rome—simply because nothing is holier to him than a joke." William Dean Howells, however, had not been nearly so severe in his review of the book by the man he kept referring to as "Mr. Clements"—only a little condescending, perhaps: "It is no business of ours to fix his rank among the humorists California has given us, but we think he is in an entirely different way from all the others, quite worthy of the company of the best."

Finally, however, Howells is willing to exempt the "California humorist" from charges of *lèse-majesté* in the realm of culture: ". . . it is always good-humored humor, too, that he lavishes on his reader, and even its impudence is charming; we do not remember where . . . it is insolent, with all its sauciness and irreverence." Even here the descriptive phrases remain condescending; though they are apt enough, after all, in defining a writer who composed his book to shock (a little) and mollify (a lot) the woman whom he had appointed his shipboard "mother." "Charming . . . impudence," "insolent," "sauciness"—these are terms suitable not so much to a man as to a boy, one of those naughty boys who is not in the final analysis downright "bad." And, indeed, Twain himself uses the word "boys" constantly to describe his closest associates among the Pilgrims, the lively few who, with him, constantly sought to flee the more aged and grim members of what he likes to call the "synagogue." Already at the very beginning of his career, he is beginning to trade on that "boyishness" which he never willingly surrendered, in order to get away with what would have been counted sacrilege in a full-fledged man. And a sufficiently perspicuous critic might well have predicted at that point that the hero in whom Twain was to embody his most mature definition of the American character would necessarily be a juvenile, just one more boy in a cast of boys.

But the "Mark Twain" of *The Innocents Abroad* is a bigger boy than Huck Finn: a boy full-grown enough to regret that his fellow-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

voyagers scanted whist and dancing and love-making in favor of prayers and the singing of hymns, and to wander the streets of Europe in search of good cigars, a decent shave and an authentic pool table—yet one not too mature to steal bunches of grapes on his way down from the Acropolis, and to torment his guides with childish horseplay. The "Mark Twain" of 1867 was, in short, the kind of boy-man we think of referring to a "Westerner," one in whom the power of adulthood and the irresponsibility of childhood ideally combine. Twain, however, did not consider himself quite such a "Westerner" as he was later to describe in *Roughing It*, "stalwart, muscular, dauntless, young braves . . . erect, bright-eyed, quick-moving, strong-handed young giants . . ."; for these exist only as legend, i.e., as someone else. Most Westerners whom Twain knew, were, in fact, rejects of the American South, "white trash" to their social superiors—whose chivalric values they did not, however, deny, seeking instead to transport those values into the "territory ahead," to give them a second chance in a virgin world. The code of the cowboy is as much derived from the Southerner's reading of Sir Walter Scott (is as embarrassingly and illiterately European, that is to say) as the values of the Klu Klux Klan; which is why Twain's "heroes" turn so easily into gunmen shooting up a sleeping town or Vigilantes imposing their version of justice upon their own opposite numbers.

The character called "Mark Twain" in *The Innocents Abroad* is a comic version of these heroic types, a *shlemiel*—or clown-Westerner, a wandering jester who has learned among the "young braves" (to whom, of course, he had always been a butt) to hate cant, despise sentimentality, distrust sophistication; and who has picked up from them a new vocabulary—a native American diction—in which that hatred, despite and distrust can become a kind of humor acceptable to the New England Brahmins themselves: a way of discharging in laughter the nagging doubts about high art and European civilization that troubled their social inferiors if not them. Moreover, "Mark Twain" had lived in a landscape so terrifyingly beautiful in its aloofness from from man's small necessities, so awesomely magnificent in its anti-human scale, that beside it the scenery of the Old World was bound to seem pallid, domesticated, dwarfed.

"Como? Pshaw! See Lake Tahoe," one of his chapter headings reads; and in a footnote to another, this time concerned with the Sea of Galilee, Twain notes: "I measure all lakes by Tahoe, partly because I am far more familiar with it than with any other, and partly because I have such a high admiration for it. . . ." Yet each time he begins by evoking the peaceful splendor of that Western lake, he ends in rage—rage at the rest of the world, which he considers somehow betrays its mythical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

splendor. On the shores of the Sea of Galilee, for instance, he remembers dreamily how on Tahoe "the tranquil interest that was born with the morning deepens and deepens, by sure degrees, until it culminates at last in resistless fascination!" But an instant later he is near hysteria, scolding the Palestinian landscape, as it were, for failing him and his memories: "these unpeopled deserts, these rusty mounds of barrenness . . . that melancholy ruin of Capernaum; this stupid village of Tiberias . . . yonder desolate declivity where the swine of the miracle ran down into the sea, and doubtless thought it was better to swallow a devil or two and get drowned into the bargain than to have to live longer in such a place. . . ."

Earlier, taking off from a comparison with Lake Como, he had been more extravagant in his praise of Tahoe: "a sea whose every aspect is impressive, whose belongings are all beautiful, whose lovely majesty types the Deity!" But he subsides quickly from the high level banality of such schoolroom English prose, into pure barroom American and once more into the rage, which seems as appropriate to the latter, as platitudes to the former style. This time, however, his rage is directed, quite unexpectedly, against the American Indians.

> Tahoe means grasshoppers. It means grasshopper soup. It is Indian, and suggestive of Indians. . . . People say that Tahoe means "Silver Lake"—"Limpid Water"—"Falling Leaf." Gosh! It means grasshopper soup, the favorite dish of the Digger tribe. . . . It isn't worthwhile in these practical times, for people to talk about Indian poetry—there never was any in them—except in the Fenimore Cooper Indians. But *they* are an extinct tribe that never existed. I know the Noble Red Man. I have camped with the Indians; I have been on the war-path with them, taken part in the chase with them—for grasshoppers; helped them steal cattle; I have roamed with them, scalped them, had them for breakfast. I would gladly eat the whole race if I had a chance.

It is an astonishing performance, which begins by puzzling us, ends by sending us back to a novel published more than a decade before—to Melville's *The Confidence Man,* a book which Mark Twain doubtless never read, but one whose twenty-sixth chapter, "Containing the Metaphysics of Indian-Hating, according to the views of one evidently not so pre-possessed as Rousseau in Favor of Savages," serves as a gloss to his meditations beside Como.

Attempting to answer, via a series of shadowy spokesman characters, the question: "why the backwoodsman still regards the red man in much the same spirit that a jury does a murderer, or a trapper a wild cat," Melville finds himself impelled to define the essential nature of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"backwoodsman," which is to say, precisely the kind of man through whose mask Twain has chosen to comment on Europe in *The Innocents Abroad.* "Though held in a sort a barbarian," Melville tells us, "the backwoodsman would seem to Americans what Alexander was to Asia —captain in the vanguard of a conquering civilization. . . . The tide of emigration, let it roll as it will, never overwhelms the backwoodsman into itself; he rides upon the advance, as the Polynesian upon the comb of the surf. Thus though he keeps moving on through life, he maintains with respect to nature much the same unaltered relation throughout; with her creatures, too, including panthers and Indians." And more generally, Melville observes "the backwoodsman is a lonely man. . . . Impulsive, he is what some might call unprincipled. At any rate, he is self-willed; being one who less hearkens to what others may say about things, than looks for himself, to see what are things themselves."

But what does the backwoodsman see, when he "looks for himself, to see what are things themselves" in respect to culture rather than nature, Europe rather than the wilderness, when he becomes an "innocent abroad"? The Westerner's bleak vision of the Old World was recorded much later by Ezra Pound, who was born properly enough in Hailey, Idaho—rendered in verse at the moment of America's entry into World War I, itself, in a sense, the continuation of tourism by other means.

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization,

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under the earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

Two major American talents had begun to wrestle with the problem, however, long before the nineteenth century was over: the two writers of their generation by whom Europe was most obsessively felt as an enigma to be endlessly attacked, precisely because it could never be entirely solved—Samuel Clemens and Henry James. Both, at any rate, were the authors of novels in which a Western American, defined as pristine Protestant and incorruptible democrat, tries to come to terms with a Europe seen as essentially aristocratic and Roman Catholic.

James's *The American* was not published until 1877, eight years after the appearance of Twain's *The Innocents Abroad,* but in terms of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fictional time, their protagonists missed meeting each other in the museums of France by less than a year; for it was, James tells us, "On a brilliant day in May, in the year 1868" that *his* gentleman from San Francisco—called with obvious symbolic intent Christopher Newman—was lounging in the Louvre. Like that other San Franciscan, "Mark Twain," Newman, we learn, was suffering from an "aesthetic headache" in the presence of all those masterpieces; and like his improbable opposite number, he was convinced from the start that the fresh copies of the Old Masters being made by various young ladies right before his eyes were superior to the dim and dusty originals.

It is easy enough to surmise what Newman is supposed to represent, but a certain Mrs. Tristram (who most nearly speaks for James in the book) makes Newman's meaning explicit, by explaining to him, " 'You are the great Western Barbarian stepping forth in his innocence and might, gazing a while at this poor effete Old World, and then swooping down on it." At that point, however, the "great Western Barbarian" —whom James never quite understood, in fact—demurs, crying out, "I am a highly civilized man"; and spends the rest of the novel trying to prove it, at considerable cost not only to himself, but to his author, who loses thereafter the comic tone on which he has opened in melancholy and melodrama. But if one chronicler of the New Barbarian in the Old World failed because of his distance from the character he was attempting to portray, the other continually risks disaster because of his uncomfortable closeness to the *persona* he has assumed.

Neither the reader nor the author of *The Innocents Abroad* is ever quite sure where Samuel Clemens stops and "Mark Twain" begins, how far Clemens is in fact what Stuart Sherman described as "the kind of travelling companion that makes you wonder why you went abroad" (in more contemporary terms, the kind of American consumer for whom Europe is just one more item on the menu of Mass Culture), and how far he is the satirist of that kind of traveler. There is no doubt, in any case, that his book is primarily about such travelers rather than about the Old World itself; that it is consequently not a "travel book" at all in the traditional sense, but a chronicle of tourism at the precise point when the Puritan aristocrat abroad is giving way to the Puritan plebeian on tour.

What that plebeian—that unforeseen new man—finds wrong with the Old World, the Old Masters, the land of the Old Testament is precisely that they are all *old,* i.e., worn out, shabby, dirty, decaying, down at the heels. This abject prejudice against seediness, however ennobled by time, both Clemens and "Twain" share with their fellow-travelers. To be sure, there is ambivalence aplenty in *The Innocents*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Abroad, most spectacularly exemplified in the chapters on Venice, where the wary Westerner, the man resolved at all costs not to be had, begins by asserting point-blank, "This famed gondola and this gorgeous gondolier!—the one an inky, rusty old canoe with a sable hearse-body clapped on to the middle of it, and the other a mangy, bare-footed guttersnipe with a portion of his raiment on exhibition which should have been sacred from public scrutiny." But a few pages later, he has apparently changed his mind, observing in conventional panegyric tones, "The Venetian gondola is as free and graceful, in its gliding movement, as a serpent. . . . The gondolier *is* a picturesque rascal for all he wears no satin harness, no plumed bonnet, no silken tights."

This doubleness of vision, however, this alternation between daytime debunking and nighttime subscription to a dream ("In the glare of day, there is little poetry about Venice, but under the charitable moon her stained palaces are white again. . . .") does not arise out of the dialogue between Clemens the artist and "Twain" the comic innocent; it has lain deep in the heart of every run-of-the-mill tourist ever since that memorable year of 1867, when, for the first time on record at least, "everybody was going to Europe. . . ." Occasionally, of course, Twain moves from echoing the Americans abroad to mocking them, but never for their vulgarity, their grossness of perception, their smug contempt for culture. What stirs his satirical impulse is rather their pretentiousness, their pitiful attempts at culture climbing: their signing hotel registers in French, or claiming loudly never to have eaten a meal without the proper wine—or, especially, their mouthing of high-flown phrases out of guidebooks in the presence of works of art they do not really understand.

When he is recounting the playful desecration of revered cultural sites, his tone is bafflingly equivocal—as in the episode in the crater of Mount Vesuvius which so infuriated Stuart Sherman. "Some of the boys thrust long slips of paper down into holes and set them on fire, and so achieved the glory of lighting their cigars by the flames of Vesuvius, and others cooked their eggs over fissures in the rocks and were happy." Surely, there is a note of friendly mockery here, but none of that cold fury with which Twain reports, say, the credulity of Europeans in the face of holy "relics" and "miracles," or the gushing response of some of his fellow Americans to such utterly ruined pictures as Da Vinci's "Last Supper" ("Maybe the originals were handsome when they were new, but they are not now").

Only at the climax of the book, when the author-protagonist stands face to face with the oldest monument he has encountered, with, that is to say, an ultimate incarnation of the persistence of the past, toward

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which he has been as ambivalent as any other ignorant American, are his last scruples overcome, his final equivocation resolved. It is the Sphinx that conquers him: "After years of waiting, it was before me at last. . . . There was a dignity not of earth in its mien. . . . It was gazing out over the ocean of Time—. . . . It was MEMORY—RETROSPECTION—wrought into visible, tangible form. . . . And there is that in the overshadowing majesty of this eternal figure of stone . . . which reveals to one something of what he shall feel when he shall stand at last in the awful presence of God." But at this point, when he has been converted however temporarily to the religion of culture, Twain looks up and sees on the jaw of the Sphinx "a wart, or an excrescence of some kind," which turns out to be, of course, a fellow American, a companion on the tour—in search of a souvenir.

"We heard," Twain tell us, abandoning himself finally to total rage against just such an "innocent" as he had all along pretended to be, "the familiar clink of a hammer, and understood the case at once. One of our well-meaning reptiles—I mean relic-hunters—had crawled up there and was trying to break a 'specimen' from the face of this the most majestic creation the hand of man has wrought." Confronted with such absolute sacrilege, however, all Twain can conceive of doing is to call a cop, i.e., a shiek, whom he urges to warn the intruder that his offense is "punishable with imprisonment or the bastinado." A hundred years later, it has become clear just how ineffectual such sanctions are against the American tourists' irrepressible need to chip away piece by piece the Old World he does not quite dare confess bores him; but what else was there then for Twain to do in response—except, of course, to write a book.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A. D. Hope

THREE POEMS

CROSSING THE FRONTIER

Crossing the frontier they were stopped in time,
Told, quite politely, they would have to wait:
Passports in order, nothing to declare,
And surely holding hands was not a crime;
Until they saw how, ranged across the gate,
All their most formidable friends were there.

Wearing his conscience like a crucifix,
Her father, rampant, nursed the Family Shame;
And, armed with their old-fashioned dinner-gong,
His aunt, who even when they both were six,
Had just to glance towards a childish game
To make them feel that they were doing wrong.

And both their mothers, simply weeping floods,
Her head-mistress, his boss, the parish priest,
And the bank manager who cashed their cheques;
The man who sold him his first rubber-goods;
Dog Fido, from whose love-life, shameless beast,
She first observed the basic facts of sex.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They looked as though they had stood there for hours;
For years; perhaps for ever. In the trees
Two furtive birds stopped courting and flew off;
While in the grass beside the road the flowers
Kept up their guilty traffic with the bees.
Nobody stirred. Nobody risked a cough.

Nobody spoke. The minutes ticked away;
The dog scratched idly. Then, as parson bent
And whispered to a guard who hurried in,
The customs-house loudspeakers with a bray
Of raucous and triumphant argument
Broke out the wedding march from *Lohengrin.*

He switched the engine off: "We must turn back."
She heard his voice break, though he had to shout
Against a din that made their senses reel,
And felt his hand, so tense in hers, go slack.
But suddenly she laughed and said: "Get out!
Change seats! Be quick!" and slid behind the wheel.

And drove the car straight at them with a harsh,
Dry crunch that showered both the scraps and chips,
Drove through them; barriers rising let them pass;
Drove through and on and on, with Dad's moustache
Beside her twitching still round waxen lips
And Mother's tears still streaming down the glass.

MORNING MEDITATION

Every day of my life
I shave the beard from my chin,
Suppress the natural man,
Do my bit in the strife
To keep original sin
As much at bay as I can.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Day after day after day,
I wake and lather and scrape;
Looking myself in the eye
I grin at my image and say:
Look at the hairy ape
Wishing himself goodbye!

Grand-dad, he had a beard,
Randy old son of a gun!
Even when it was white
He, if a wench appeared,
Would roar to get her to run
And catch and cuddle her tight.

Father, too, had a black
Stubble upon his chin;
Every day of his life
With a hollow blade he would hack
At the natural man within—
He did it to pleasure his wife.

She was a handsome jade,
Black, undauntable eyes,
Snug bottom and well-turned calf;
When Father had stropped his blade,
He would reach between her thighs,
Pluck out a hair and laugh.

Then in his sixtieth year,
Seeing the black jowl hoar,
He lathered and gave a groan,
Took himself by the ear,
Picked up the blade once more,
And cut his throat to the bone.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Grandfather took his fun,
Rolled in all manner of hay;
Father could bell the cat
But died of seeing it done;
I keep the beast at bay
With a safety razor, at that!

Having no child or wife,
Sin or superfluous hair,
I live by the Golden Rule.
And every day of my life
I think of that sinful pair
And curse myself for a fool.

DRAGON MUSIC

No other man makes love like you, she said:
His blood escaped in panic from her wound;
Through the dear mouth a dragon panted flame,
It lit the ancient treasures in the mound,
It tore him in four pieces in the bed—
No other lover, she said, was quite the same!

She did not see them there, the four men all
Wound in her arms, sharing his startled eyes:
Cocksure the Great Seducer crowed his song;
The virile bristles rustled down his thighs;
The golden feathers sprouted from his tail;
His heart's bronze warders smacked their mighty gong.

But the Slave's heart in that tremendous din
Burst counting the incredible troops of lust;
Her Old Boys' Union, with beer and hearty jokes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Held celebrations, invited him to join,
Published their names in alphabetical lists,
Danced round the bonfire of his burning sex.

The Observer smiling landed from his yacht,
Notebook in hand, rubbed noses with the chief.
"The native girl's magnificent physique
Makes her insatiable in love" he wrote.
The surf ran moaning on the jagged reef;
His camera gave the customary click.

Grasping a bright bough from the sacred wood,
The Lover explored her dark and tender dream.
Among the ghosts he breathed her words for breath,
And in his veins the words became his blood,
Till his heart, leaping in ecstasy from her stream
Died on the bank, thrashing in silver death.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eric Bentley

IN BAHNHOF FRIEDRICHSTRASSE

Summer 1965—if the Berlin Wall didn't exist it would have to be invented. What could symbolize better how we are placed on earth side by side but insist on living divided from each other, however irrationally? But then, and this too is symbolic, the Wall has cracks in it. Through one crack the S-Bahn (Elevated Railroad) runs from West Berlin to the Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof. When you get off the train, nothing tells you, if you are a foreigner, what to do. If you look up you see a couple of guards with rifles or submachine guns slung across their backs, perched on a kind of balustrade up near the roof. If you look down, there are stairs indicating that West German visitors should go down them. When for lack of other suggestions you too follow them, you come to a ticket booth, and there ask where foreigners should go. You are aware that your question goes not only to the person you speak to but several others, including policemen, People's Policemen. You are sent around corners to a point you later come to regard as the world's real center. At some former date in history it was doubtless just a right-angle bend in a corridor of an old-fashioned railroad station. Fitted up with new railings, and armed guards, while its lights and furnishings have been left in a primitive state, it is pure nightmare, and the right angle is part of a diabolical plan. Waiting rooms had something of this poorly lit, dirty desolation in the old railroad stations, and this is a railroad station, and you are waiting. Only not for a train. You are waiting to be adjudged harmless. Well, you are harmless, aren't you? But is that good? Or should you, rather, be the very person they wish to apprehend—one who is plotting mischief, arranging to build tunnels through the Wall, or to bring people through the checkpoints on other people's passports? What would Antigone be doing? What would Karl Marx be thinking?

The world of Ulbricht—Walter Ulbricht and myself actually touched,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the Kammerspiele the other night, when he put in an unannounced appearance at *La belle Hélène*. The Offenbach opera had been adapted by Peter Hacks, whose play *Worries about Power* was withdrawn in a hurry not long ago for its political unorthodoxy. Or rather just for showing that East Germany has its economic and human problems. Everybody keeps staring at Ulbricht to see how he responds to Helen. At the appropriate times, he smiles, he claps. He is much smaller than his photographs suggest, only comes up to my chin when we pass in the aisle. His violence is no more apparent from his person than Goldwater's or Lyndon Johnson's. How hard history is to believe! No wonder people met Stalin and concluded he had *not* committed any atrocities: he too was very small. And was even Eichmann banal, as Hannah Arendt says? That is hardly the word for Göring and Goebbels, anyhow.

And what of our century's greatest hero and supreme symbol, the man with the Charlie Chaplin moustache? I have been able to see him on film several times since returning to Germany. Reunion with an old friend? He copied Chaplin, and then, in *The Great Dictator,* Chaplin copied him. *Twin* symbols of our century? And Chaplin a Communist sympathizer. But Chaplin's skit on Hitler is only mimicry, not portraiture. He renders inimitably the non-German's impression of the Fuehrer's voice and the German language. He projects actually the Cockney conviction that everyone on the Continent is temperamental to the point of lunacy. Above all, he gives far too favorable an impression of Hitler's technique. In comparison, the historical Adolf, in film clips selected for public perusal by his own propaganda ministry, is positively gauche. One can well understand that German aristocrats with nothing against the Final Solution would have been shocked to the soul by his awkwardness. Hitler was a hick from the Austrian backwoods. The radio flattered him. For if he took lessons in gesture and body movement he never got out of the beginner's class. In the newsreel clips, you see him fumble and hesitate with his hands. His voice must have had a fascination for many—*se monumentum quaeris, circumspice*—but what he did was chiefly to misuse it, tormenting himself into paroxysms of would-be eloquence. The ultimate in Naturalism: when oratory is not achieved at all, what we have *must* be Sincerity. The contrast with the empty stateliness of German public speaking generally is remarkable: and there indeed one glimpses the source of the gentleman's success. He embodied suppressed resentment against the old Establishment. And his very incapacity found an echo in every Spiessbürger's breast: here "our own" inarticulateness was mirrored—and was turned into its opposite, partly by growls, groans and shrieks, but even more by action. The point is not to talk about the world but to change it. Yours not to reason why, yours but to do and kill.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof one always ends up thinking about Hitler. Deadest of Germans, he is also the most alive. "NS-Vergangenheit." This is the phrase applied to all Germans with a shady past: one speaks of their "national socialist past." Of course, most Germans over forty-five have something of an NS-Vergangenheit, and this is very noticeably true at the professional level, since professional people occupy positions of leadership or at least prestige. Communists, like Jews, are exceptions. The Volksgemeinschaft did not include them, and so they feel themselves entitled to claim that their State, the DDR, has been purified from Nazism, while they mercilessly expose Nazism in the Federal Republic. In this, however, they participate in the general German hypocrisy, since they too—perforce—have used many ex-Nazis, especially lawyers, in important positions. And the very man who hands out the most virulent Party propaganda on East German TV, Karl Eduard von Schnitzler, was an enthusiastic supporter of Hitler's war effort up to the moment when he was captured by the British in 1945.

By chance I met the person who interviewed Von Schnitzler at that time on behalf of the BBC, which was looking for Germans who would be willing to take part in anti-Nazi broadcasts. "Don't you hate the British?" he asked Von Schnitzler. "I did," the latter answered, "I did till a few days ago. My heart was full of hatred for them. When I saw our planes and how many there were of them, my heart was full of hate for England." "But now it isn't?" "No, last Wednesday, I saw the British planes, and how many there were of *them*. England, too, is a great power, I said to myself. And the hate for England died in my heart." The hate must have died also for the chief enemy, Soviet Russia, since a few years later, Von Schnitzler switched from West to East German radio and television.

Today he presides over a couple of weekly TV programs—both remarkable in their way. On one he shows clips from West German television. (I don't know what the East/West division has done to copyright—probably destroyed it entirely. They rob each other's TV programs quite freely, it seems.) The idea is to see the Westerners condemned out of their own mouths. Some of them, of course, stand condemned out of their own mouths without any assistance from Herr von S. Some of them—Heinrich Lübke, for instance—need only be seen and heard. When I hear President Lübke's flabby, flaccid enunciation I am ready to believe anything of him. Actually, the "assistance" Von S. renders has the reverse of the intended effect. The intention is so evidently malicious, the absence of any interest in the truth as such so very obvious, that one's sympathy inevitably goes to the victim. Besides which, Von S.'s logical specialty is the *non sequitur*. He is forever drawing con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sequences that aren't there, forcing a meaning on a speaker that is obviously contrary to the intention. There is so much misleading talk of the diabolical efficiency of the totalitarian systems! Actually we owe our lives to their inefficiency and silliness. If they were not as inefficient and silly as ourselves they would have won the last war.

Take the Wall. Take this very corner of the Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse where I am sitting. A few weeks ago a young British friend of mine was here. He had come to Berlin to put on a show and had all his wages in his pocket—they amounted to a couple of hundred dollars. He knew no German, didn't fully understand what he was told about papers, thought it all didn't matter much anyway, and failed to mention on these papers how much money he was carrying. That was on the way East. Returning at 11:00 P.M., after seeing a play at the Berlin Ensemble, he gave a confusing account of what he now had. Then, to show how honest he was, and how there was nothing at stake, he produced *all* his cash for the customs officials to see. Result: he was immediately taken into custody for fraud. They held him till 5:00 the next morning. Kafkaesque scenes were enacted. An interpreter was called in whose chief interest was fishing for compliments from my friend on his good English. He was absurdly friendly. But the watches of the night were jogging by, and Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse is a very grim place, especially when you are under guard and confined in what is virtually a solitary cell.

My friend got his money back, but only some months later, and after all kinds of wires had been pulled by all kinds of VIP's and Organizations. He got his money back: that's my point. The whole operation was inefficiently conducted and in any case futile. Had my friend really been breaking the rules he would have been in no trouble at all. He would have hidden the money they didn't want him to have somewhere on his person. For, normally speaking, no one is ever searched. Which of course makes nonsense of the view that the wall is there to stop traffic in money.

Why don't they search people, by the way? Are they just staggered at the thought of how many man-hours it would take up? Are they reluctant to add to the already considerable irritation people feel at procedures at the wall? Is their fear of black-marketering in money not really all that great?

I don't know the answers to these questions, and that too is my point. The natural response to this "world of the wall" is not the blustering indignation of the politicians and the reporters of the popular press but rather bewilderment. The American press—*Time*, especially—seems lacking in real reporters, preferring philosophers—bad philosophers. What is said emanates from a theory, not from observation. A recent instance

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was *Time*'s reporting of the East German decision to make Western visitors to East Berlin buy some East money at *their* rates. *Time* represented this money as a fee, as if one were not allowed to spend it. And they repeated their usual description of the customs officials and police as Surly. These men can indeed be surly and worse, but just as often they are jovial and all smiles. For this is not Whittaker Chambers, it is Kafka. When they smile, *you* are surly, as often as not. You ask yourself what in hell they are so cheerful about.

Yes, it's one's own moods one must watch, as they are affected, not only by the moods of others, but by the bureaucratic process itself. One evening I got so furious, here at the Wall, I turned round and went home without ever getting through. I had been on my way to the theater, which was about five minutes away—but on the other side. I had handed in my passport, it had disappeared into the Rooms Beyond, and I was left watching a queue that seemed totally stationary. What seemed infuriating about the guards was that they were doing nothing—and not surlily *à la Time,* but imperturbably. I thought I'd get a rise out of one by demanding my passport back and announcing I was returning home. He remained imperturbable and gave me the passport. No impropriety that I could report to *Time*'s Berlin office! I drove back home in redoubled rage.

And this incident had a sequel with another significant twist—or do I mean significantly lacking in significance? As long as my rage lasted I was resolved never to go through the Wall again. I cancelled a speaking engagement I had had in East Berlin. Yet rage subsides, and gives place to sullen resentment. I wanted to see that show, and turned up again at show time, sulking vigorously to an audience of fellow visitors only. For the customs men and police, though they are always the same individuals, and one gets to know their faces well, have obviously been instructed *not* to get on familiar terms with visitors, and each time one is greeted as a total stranger by someone who is less and less a total stranger, which also helps the resentment grow. But this time, of all times, the young man handling my papers decided to know me. Reading my name out from my passport, he asked: "Mister Bentley? Did you give an interview to the press that was quoted on the radio?" Oh my God, I thought, my little tantrum set them to checking up on me, now doubtless they have rooted out some unpleasant remarks I've made about something in East German theater, and I'm about to be banished from their territory forever. "What interview was that?" I asked nervously. "A few months back," said the young man, "you said East Berlin also had good theater. *Was* it you?" So, I was getting a *good mark.* They wanted me to feel appreciated. This was as near as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they could come, maybe, to apologizing to me for the other evening? Or was there no connection? Was it entirely by chance that the young man had become communicative? The smile he gave me when returning the passport and letting me through was not of the routine kind but genuinely interested and friendly. Or was it?

The Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof feels like a jail. You have the sensation that you may never again see the light of day. Then suddenly—when the process of filling out forms and being looked at is over—you are out and on the street. What have you emerged into? Just a street? Nothing in East Berlin, at any rate for the visitor, is *just* anything. It is that thing in a setting of uncertainty and ghostly unreality. A lack of gay faces, *Time* will have it. That's the formula they've found. One sympathizes with their plight, given that their readers demand the absolute truth in a very few words of very bad English and in a form that disturbs no conventional preconceptions. A lack of gay faces? Sometimes it is, rather, a lack of faces altogether—I mean where one expects faces to be, as, above all, in the streets of a big city. The neighborhood of the Volksbühne is very eerie in this way. The Volksbühne is a big new centrally placed theater in the imposing, forbidding style of Soviet Classical public buildings. This having been a bombed-out area, every building in sight is brand-new, spick and span. But why are there no people around? One would think it was 5:00 in the morning. In East Berlin 5:00 in the afternoon very often seems to be 5:00 in the morning.

Is West Berlin any less freakish, though? What can one make of half a city, surrounded by barbed wire and wall, in the midst of an enemy zone? (The proposition is as preposterous as it is unprecedented. And the problems are solved preposterously.) Well, obviously one can make propaganda, and on the grandest scale. Khrushchev could bluster about invasion, and Bobby Kennedy could bluster about using the atomic bomb. Ideals soar higher than spaceships whenever the word Berlin comes up in Moscow or Washington. It is a useful word, but expensive, of course. It is expensive to stand guard over Ulbricht—or over Brandt. But there is profit as well as loss. West Berlin is a city to invest in, East Germany is a fine place to rob. And then there are the games that East and West play with each other! Sometimes Moscow and Washington tire of them, but Pankow and Bonn, never. Every issue, however real, becomes a game, played with Teutonic earnestness and *furor*. Both sides are always right. And wrong. Pick your issue according to your allegiance and zest for battle. And the final joke is that for all their pleas of independence, or even of dependence on Russia or America, they are dependent on—each other. Behind the pretence of not even being on speaking terms, West and East Berlin officials have to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meeting all the time. The very feces of West Berlin are taken care of by East Berlin—boy, do they need each other!

If the elaborate patterns of life in the East bloc suggest meaninglessness, the no less elaborate pattern of East-West relations suggests fakery. To this latter pattern, of course, one comes better prepared. That every moral gesture or utterance should be a phony is something one has been brought up to whatever one's origin. Berlin provides only new examples. For instance, on arriving in West Berlin, I was informed that the elevated railway, being East property, was being boycotted by the West, and I should not invest my twenty pfennigs in it. But as an observer, I felt I had a prior obligation to observe. Upon observing, I found the El full (or half full) of other Westerners, albeit mostly of such as didn't have too many pfennigs to invest in the politicians' high ideals. Checking back with the secretarial lady who had given me the warning, I found that her own ideals really weren't all that high—her objection to the El was precisely that dirty and ill-clad people were to be seen on it. Let them eat cake—and travel on the (more expensive) subway! The same lady expressed surprise that I was willing to visit Wedding. I was visiting something as respectable as an art gallery there, but it is a working class section.

What a wonderful essay could be written if there were a Swift around on the way both sides *make* free with the *word* Free. The East, as is known, has real freedom, instead of formal freedom. But that's nothing. The West has plain old genuine Freedom, of which the capital F reaches God. And far from having a subtle, wire-drawn, Jesuitical definition, this Freedom has one unambiguous meaning: that you're not in the East bloc. Spain and Portugal are free, Taiwan and South Vietnam are free. So do not run away with the idea that the Free in Free University (of Berlin) means that no charge is made for tuition. On the contrary. It means that the faculty may be Nazis but that they certainly aren't Communists. Hence, there is no great parade, at the Free University, of that formal freedom which the Marxists make fun of. Free speech, for example, does not exist there. The Rektor recently stopped Erich Kuby from speaking there. (Kuby is a liberal journalist, whose work has recently appeared in *Der Spiegel*. His crime was having made a joke about the word "free" in the phrase Free University.) In welcoming Saragat to the special freedom of this particular borough, the same Rektor reverently invoked the name of the one important Italian philosopher who supported Mussolini (Gentile).

The biggest recent scandal at this Free institution occurred in my own field of theater and drama. When the Free University was set up in 1949, with all the trumpets of Freedom blaring, the man they chose

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to represent this field was a man the German public of that time knew pretty well, by the name of Hans Knudsen. They knew him because he had been the drama critic (or non-critic, after Goebbels abolished criticism) of the Völkischer Beobachter. At the Nazi University of Berlin, Knudsen stood by while his old master Max Herrmann was deprived of all his resources in preparation for his death (in 1942) in Theresienstadt. Knudsen didn't just stand by. He promoted the "philosophy" of anti-Semitism in the field of Theaterwissenschaft. What happened last winter was that documents proving this were published in a Berlin newspaper—photostats and all. It also came out that Knudsen got his title of Professor under the Nazis only by the personal intervention of Alfred Rosenberg. Even a Dean who wrote "Heil Hitler!" before his signature didn't want to accept him. That was in the years 1943-44. Five years later he was taken on without any known demur by the Free University. And the Free University would never to this day have taken any stand against Knudsen had it not been shamed into it by the liberal press.

The liberal press. There is one. That is one of the best things about West Germany, and one which, of course, has no parallel, *can* have no parallel, in the East. The East limits itself to exploiting all the dirt about the West which the liberal press of the West prints. The Knudsen affair was duly gone over in *Theater der Zeit*, the East Berlin theater magazine. The paper that "broke" the story had been the *Spandauer Volksblatt*, the paper of dissident but non-Communist West Berlin youth. But, sprightly as it is, the *Volksblatt* has very limited news coverage. There is not a first-rate *news*paper in all of Berlin. For that you have to go to Hamburg (*Die Welt*) or Frankfurt (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*). The most important political journalist in Germany today—more important even than Walter Lippmann in America—is Rudolf Augstein, the editor of *Der Spiegel*. The world heard something of Augstein's arrest at the instance of Franz Josef Strauss a year or two ago. The incident symbolizes the confrontation of liberal journalism with Old Germany. Fat, foxy, philistine and ferocious, Strauss is a figure straight out of the Georg Grosz cartoons of forty years ago; Augstein is a Georg Grosz of words instead of drawings. You need to follow the *Spiegel* issue by issue to appreciate the insistency of his guerrilla war against the Germany, not only of Hitler, but of Adenauer, and not only of Adenauer, but of Erhardt, and not only of Erhardt, but of Ulbricht.

One should not see the old Nazis and the Neo-Nazis as the chief danger. That is a trap. Only in New York has *The Deputy* been picketed by men with swastika armbands. In Germany, those who a generation ago would have worn swastikas are now happy enough with the Hammer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Sickle or the Stars and Stripes. Consequently the voice of the Monster may in future have a sound quite unlike Adolf Hitler's screeching falsetto. It will more likely sound like Milquetoast or Walt Rostow. The old brown and black shirts have been bleached white. And in their white shirts the new men fly to the U.S. for honorary degrees.

Günter Grass is maintaining that the answer to Erhardt is Brandt. I have seen this mentioned in the American press. But how many Americans know of Pastor Martin Niemoeller's declaration, "Tasks of Politics in 1965," in which he recommends the spoiling of as many ballots as possible in this year's elections as a protest against the mere pretense of democracy which in his belief is the federal system? True, even in Germany an attitude like Grass's gets more public attention than one like Niemoeller's. *Public* attention. Western Germany is to a large extent a publicity operation, staged, as it were, by the Chamber of Commerce. When in New York, Erhardt told of having sat in the ruins of the Nuremberg Stadium back in 1945 with his "good friend Henry Luce" and telling the good Henry there was one way in which Germany could be rebuilt and that was by free enterprise. Today Krupp is the richest man in Europe. And the social democrats are as eager as ever to prove themselves no different from non-social democrats.

Günter Grass is clutching at a straw, but who wouldn't, when there is nothing else to clutch at? Or is there? Peter Weiss thinks there is. He has clutched at the Russian bear itself and must now find out if (as an artist at any rate) he can survive a bear hug. The encounter has been a curious one to watch, and one did literally watch it, as it, or significant moments of it, was shown on East German TV. On the little screen one saw Weiss telling the East Germans that *their* understanding of his Marat-Sade play was the right one. In other words, Marat is the hero, and Sade the villain. Funnily enough, this was not what Weiss had told the presumably Communist director of the West Berlin production, Konrad Swinarski. But meanwhile some months passed, and those months seem to have marked the conversion of Weiss, if not to Communism, then to Fellow-Traveling. He now says one must choose between East and West and he has chosen the East.

Can anyone over thirty-five confront the politics of Grass on the one hand or of Weiss on the other with other than a despondent feeling of *déjà vu*? Why should a solution be found in the Social Democrats of 1965 any more than it was in their predecessors of 1914 or 1933? And why should the East Bloc be embraced at the very time it has shown itself not to be a bloc at all? And just following the time when we learned that the outrages of which the Soviet regime had been accused during the Stalin years actually were committed?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Official Communism and official Anti-Communism are both bankrupt. Yet my friends tell me that pronouncing "a plague on both your houses" is too negative. Too negative for what? Am I to minimize the shortcomings (i.e., crimes and outrages) of one of the two sides, just to enable myself to become a hypocritical champion of the other? Isn't that too positive by half? Surely the main objection to Stalinism yesterday, as to "Johnsonism" today, is that, in the name of an uncertain moral result, it asks us to accept, deny, and conceal the certain immoral means? A "purely negative" attitude might well be preferable to any choice between such positive alternatives. But is it necessary to be purely negative? That would be to assume the Wall is solid and perpetual. Actually there are cracks in it. Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse, as I was saying, is one of the cracks.

About five minutes walk from the Bahnhof, on the East side, lives Wolf Biermann. Now there's a Communist, if you like, though hardly the Parisian fellow-traveler type, cleverly justifying every twist and turn of official policy, or deftly shifting the subject to "how about the Negroes in the South?" Strictly speaking, Biermann is an ex-Communist, but then too he says he wouldn't "choose freedom" and go West if the Wall were opened to him and the streets of welcoming West Berlin were covered with gold.

Biermann is a poet and singer. "He has had the best publicity East Germany could give any man," said the friend who guided me to his apartment. "What's that?" I asked. "Walter Ulbricht," was the reply, "publicly read Biermann out of the Party, and if that wouldn't bring a poet to the attention of the public I don't know what would." Wolf Biermann sang for me. He writes both the words and the music. There was an "American" song—Woody Guthrie-Pete Seeger style, a little mixed up—about the Civil Rights worker William L. Moore who was murdered in the South. That's routine, of course, for any radical songster. Far from routine is Biermann's song about the Communist who escaped from Buchenwald in 1939, got to Moscow, and there was shot by Stalin on information supplied by the Nazis. Far from routine is the song about the East German citizen who was beaten up by the police for dancing free style. Far from routine, his address:

TO THE OLD COMRADES

1.
Look at me, comrades
With your tired eyes
With your hardened eyes
Good-natured eyes
See me dissatisfied with the age

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That you hand over to me.

You speak in old words
Of the bloody victories of our class
You point with old hands to the arsenal
Of the bloody battles. Full of jealousy
I hear reports of your sufferings
Of the happiness you found in struggle behind the barbed wire
And yet I am not myself happy:
I'm dissatisfied with the new order.

But you stand there disappointed
Astonished
Affronted
Bitter at so much ingratitude.
Embarrassed, you scratch your skimpy hair.

2.
The present, *for you*
A sweet goal all those bitter years
For me is only a bitter beginning, calls out
For changes. Full of impatience
I hurl myself into the battle of the classes, new ones which
If they don't cover the battlefield with corpses yet
Cover it with sufferings.

3.
Yes, many sweet fruits still
Fall into our lap
And on our heads.

Oh, for the wedding night with the new age
For the giant embraces, oh,
And even for the deepest pain of love
Our hearts are still weak, and weak still
Are our loins.

Thus is many a slim young fellow
Crushed by a big and beautiful woman
On bright love nights. Yes,
Giants are needed in courage and pleasure
Giants in pain also
In fighting strength, giants. And my heart:
Red
Pale
Full of hate
Full of love
Is your own heart, comrades!
Is only that which you
Have given me!

And therefore with my impatience
Don't be impatient, old men:
Patience

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For me impatience is
The whore of cowardice
And buddy-buddy with laziness
Getting the bed ready for crime.
For you, though, patience would be an
Adornment.
Set a good conclusion on your work
In that you leave to us
The new beginning!

"You wait there," says Biermann in another poem, "seriously certain that I'll go swimming into the net of Self-Criticism for you; but I am a pike: you'd have to tear me limb from limb, chop me up, put me through the mincing machine, if you wanted me on bread!" Well, maybe they do want Biermann on bread, the mincing machines are certainly on hand, but the political point is clear: today the opposition comes from within. The opponents of the Communist governments are not necessarily friends of Lyndon Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover, or even of Leo Cherne and Sidney Hook; they are other Communists, with a non-Stalinist view of Communism. Isn't there a lesson there for our people too? For the dissident young in the Western countries are not young Whittaker Chamberses wanting to work for the Gay Pay Oo. The issue is not treason, or even desertion. And anyway, going over to the other side, whichever the other side is, has less and less drama because it has less and less significance, whether the "defector" is Peter Weiss or Uwe Johnson. *It is staying that counts now*, but staying, not as a hired man of a regime, but as a thorn in the flesh of a regime. So one does not cross the Wall to make headlines, one stays on one's own side of it—to make trouble.

And so the Wall is accepted? By no means. It is the fighting of the Cold War that favors this Wall—and Walls to come, as, maybe, between North and South Vietnam. But more and more what the writers and other artists are feeling is that they should put themselves at a distance from the regimes and their wars and address themselves to just people —which, as a minimum, means "to each other." And so Wolf Biermann and I were able to speak "to each other," without my seeming to be a Communist, and without his intimating that he wished to "choose Freedom," and I was considerably more at home than I could be sitting down with my ex-Dean McGeorge Bundy or with the Trustees of a university which has given doctorates to McNamara, Lodge and Erhardt.

Martin Buber comes to mind: "That people can no longer carry on authentic dialogue with one another is not only the most acute symptom of the pathology of our time, it is also that which most urgently makes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a demand of us. I believe, despite all, that the peoples in this hour can enter into dialogue. . . . To the task of initiating this conversation those are inevitably called who carry on today within each people the battle against the anti-human. Those who build the great unknown front across mankind shall make it known by speaking unreservedly with one another, not overlooking what divides them but determined to bear this division in common."

Such a front does exist today. One would have to be deaf and blind not to find it in Prague or Warsaw—or, to go by reports, in Moscow, Hanoi, and maybe even Peking. It is one of the big reasons why the unrest in the United States should not be explained away or otherwise made light of. American youth has more to lose than its beards and dirty jeans, and more to defend. Even Vietnam is not all that is at stake, though it would be enough. Even World War III is not all that is at stake, though, if it happened, it would engulf all else. At stake is the honor of mankind, an irreducible human something without which mankind would not deserve to survive and without which one would not even want it to survive.

Does one want it to survive? *Really*? This will be the crucial question in the years ahead. I look around the corridor in Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse. There are the officious little guards with their high black boots and their military breeches. And here are we, their victims, waiting, waiting in the dirty grey-brown corridor. To this corridor all the aeons of evolution have led. And if I suddenly run to the door, the rifle of that fellow over there will slip from his shoulder, and he will shoot me down. Just outside is the new Glass House, through which one returns to the West. Glass, so no one can hide. The House of Tears, the East Berliners call it. Does one wish to survive? I should understand the Easterner who said No, and as a Westerner I should also find it hard to say Yes, if what the world offered was what the Western regimes are currently offering, if, that is, the world were nothing more than the world's regimes, the world's two sets of regimes. But it isn't. And I can't agree that the outlook is blacker than ever before. That the outlook is extremely black is nothing new. New, so far as I can judge, is only a certain positive aspect to the whole situation, namely, that youth movements, peace movements, *et cetera, et cetera,* are bursting out everywhere, that there is more and more widespread unrest, and less and less inclination to accept either the world as it is or the measures proposed by the regimes to change it. It always was, and it remains, unlikely that the good will triumph, but can it not be said for the present state of affairs that at least it provides some of us with a vocation?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Saskatchewan

—Where student sport is only "for fun" and there is no fraternity system.

—Where "town-gown" relations are mutually respectful and ethnic diversity resists the cultural "melting pot."

—Where social innovations (e.g. Medicare) and a range of developmental stages (from the hunting-and-fishing economy of the Northern Indians and Metis to the urban centers of the South) provide a natural laboratory for social research.

—Where all research is unclassified.

—Where a divisional academic organization permits a combination of interdisciplinary and traditional teaching and research.

You are invited to apply for the following positions for 1966-67:

Anthropology	*—1 position* to initiate full-time work in the field.*
Economics	*—2 positions — 1 in Econometrics and/or Mathematical Economics; 1 in Microeconomics and Growth theory.*
Geography	*—1 position* to initiate full-time work in Human Geography with special emphasis on North America*
History	*—3 positions*
Political Science	*—2 positions*
Psychology	*—4 positions — in Developmental, Social, Experimental and Learning*
Sociology	*—3 positions*

** Subject to approval of creation of position by Board of Governors.*

Salaries, etc. —

In current year, Full Professor = $14,000 minimum; Associate Professor = $11,000 to $13,600; Assistant Professor = $8,200 to $10,600; Instructor = $6,000 to $8,000.
Teaching duties: Sept. to April; normal load 9 hours per week.

For further information, write to Dallas W. Smythe, Chairman, Division of the Social Sciences, Univ. of Saskatchewan Regina Campus, Regina, Canada.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VARIETY

SEX AND THE SUPERMAN

No, no, no, Jules Feiffer,[1] you're wrong about Superman not hankering for Lois Lane. Your whole premise is jeopardized, don't you see, by slavish adherence to a schizoid diagnosis. "It can't be that Kent wanted Lois to respect him for himself, since himself was Superman. Then, it appears, he wanted Lois to respect him for his fake self, to love him when he acted the coward, to be there when he pretended he needed her. . . . Superman never needed her, never needed anybody—in any event, Lois chased *him*—so, of course, he didn't love her. He had contempt for her. Another typical American romance." No, no, no. One really expects more sophistication from Mr. Feiffer in this matter. And this matter is important, you see, for Superman is the most fabulous of the comic book heroes—part of our folklore already, one might argue. And the most engaging feature of the Superman stories was surely not the fellow's prowess at bending bridges into pretzels or dispatching felons with a flick of his cuticle—for, by definition, he was invincible, so what suspense could there be over the outcome?—but the fruitless romance between Lois and Superman-Kent.

First, any good logician would have to question the assumption, perpetuated by the comic strip itself, that Superman was real and Clark Kent was the put-on. It is important to recall the famous episode, reprinted in Mr. Feiffer's book, describing how Superman got here from the doomed planet Krypton: "A scientist placed his infant son within an experimental rocket-ship, launching it toward earth!" A nice rumpled couple discover the baby who is shipped to an orphan asylum till that

1 THE GREAT COMIC BOOK HEROES. Compiled, introduced and annotated by Jules Feiffer. Dial Press. $9.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nice couple decides to adopt the tiny strongman. No indication, mind you, of any documents on the rocket ship identifying the child (and had there been any, they surely would not have identified him as "Superman"—you wouldn't call a baby that, even on Krypton). No, the Superman part had to be invented, for that nice couple was named Kent, and their little hulk grew to supermanhood as a member of the family. When his adoptive parents died, "Clark decided he must turn his titanic strength into channels that would benefit mankind. And so was created—SUPERMAN, champion of the oppressed," etc. So no one's going to tell me Clark Kent slept with that costume on under his pajamas.

But why did he maintain the two identities? Mr. Feiffer never touches on this basic question. Surely Superman could have performed his constabulary function quite as well without retaining the Kent alter ego. Why all that skulking around in closets and men's rooms and on window ledges shucking his baggy Clark Kent suit? I'll tell you why. Because—Feiffer's "Superman . . . never needed anybody" not withstanding—because Superman wanted *love*. He looked like a man, talked like a man, indeed *was* a man, albeit a peculiarly endowed one. Why assume he had no libido? Is it not more logical to assume he had a *super* libido? He could, of course, ravage any woman on earth (not excluding Wonder Woman, I daresay)—may well have, in fact. But that is not love. Nor, understandably, did he want to be loved for his supermanhood. After all, anyone can love a Superman. What he wanted was to be loved as a mortal, as a regular guy; *ergo,* the Clark Kent identity. He was *testing* Lois Lane. But she, the dumb bitch, never got the picture; she was unworthy of him. Yet—yet I think he loved her; why else did he keep saving *her* and not a million other skirts? Beyond this, there is a tantalizing if somewhat clinical and highly speculative theory about why Superman never bedded down with Lois, never really let himself get hotted up over her; Superman, remember, was the Man of Steel. Consider the consequences of supercoitus and the pursuit of The Perfect Orgasm at the highest level. So Supe, a nice guy, had to sublimate. This is the same conclusion that Mr. Feiffer reaches but by no means the same approach: "The ideal of masculine strength, whether Gary Cooper's, Lil Abner's, or Superman's, was for one to be so virile and handsome, to be in such a position of strength that he need never go near girls. Except to help them. And then get the hell out. Real rapport was not for women. It was for villains. That's why they got hit so hard." My argument has more pathos to it: it is a sign not of strength that Superman never goes near girls but, rather, of his critical flaw.

Mr. Feiffer does better in his discussion of Batman, noting as he does

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the greater intrinsic interest in the character because he is mortal, if not quite normal—he cannot fly or move faster than light or turn himself into a flame thrower or other handy things in the ongoing struggle against evil. The Batman stories were far better plotted, better villained, better drawn than rival entries, and far scarier, Feiffer points out. But he errs again in handling the basic sexual configuration.

Even before Leslie Fiedler was disrobing the subject in *Love and Death in the American Novel,* others of us were exploring it in its hardly less pertinent manifestation in the comic book (see my unpublished paper, "Come Back to the Batmobile, Robin, Honey"). Feiffer dismisses serious consideration of the homosexual undertow in Batman and, in effect, sneers at the insights of psychiatrist Frederic Wertham, who pointed out in his *Seduction of the Innocent*: ". . . Sometimes Batman ends up in bed injured and young Robin is shown sitting next to him. At home they lead an idyllic life. They are Bruce Wayne and 'Dick' Grayson. Bruce Wayne is described as a 'socialite' and the official relationship is that Dick is Bruce's Ward. They live in sumptuous quarters, with beautiful flowers in large vases. . . . Batman is sometimes shown in a dressing gown. . . . It is like a wish dream of two homosexuals living together." Feiffer argues that Batman and Robin were no more or less queer than their youngish readers, "many of whom palled around together, didn't trust girls, played games that had lots of bodily contact. . . ." But Wertham's insights abide. After all, what kind of boy is called "Dick"? What kind of man has flowers around—and wears a dressing gown? (To answer "a rich socialite" is to beg the question.) Why was "Dick" sitting next to Bruce's bed (and was it only Bruce's)? And why, Wertham might have asked, were there no women around? And what about those snug briefs that daring duo used to flit around in? Mr. Feiffer's naïveté is showing. (One should note in defense of whatever perversions in fact constituted Batbliss that, clearly, they were not debilitating: the pair of them fought at least as well as Cassius Clay, though Batman *was* always getting knocked down.)

Where Batman was anti-feminine, Wonder Woman was anti-masculine, but here, too, Mr. Feiffer fails to see what should have been transparently clear to any serious interpreter of the comics. Feiffer writes: "My problem with Wonder Woman was that I could never get myself to believe she was that good. For if she was as strong as they said, why wasn't she tougher-looking? Why wasn't she bigger? Why was she so flat-chested? . . . Wonder Woman wasn't dykey enough." Right. And she wasn't dykey enough for the same reason she wasn't chestier, and Feiffer comes within a hair of figuring it out but fails disappointingly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when he adds, "Had they given us a Wonder Woman with balls—that would have been something for Dr. Wertham and the rest of us to wrestle with!" But that is precisely it: she's Billy Batson in drag—the first (and only) transvestite comic hero. That flat chest, those narrow hips, the way she delivered an uppercut—and never even a passing reference to matters of feminine hygiene that one would expect to come up in the natural order of things. WW was a superbly inventive spoof on "the feminine mystique"—and well before it became modish.

These questions are not idle preoccupations, for it must be remembered that the lure of the comic book heroes was most potent in the years immediately preceding puberty. In their veiled way, the antics of those muscular worthies were our sex surrogates and not merely what Feiffer calls "our booze," not merely sops for smallfry psyches repressed by grownups who victimized us at every turn (see Edgar Z. Friedenberg *et al.*).

While *The Great Comic Book Heroes* was evidently not intended as the definitive comment on the genre, it might profitably have touched on at least some of the unresolved issues that, hopefully, will be explored in the future at the doctoral level. Why, for example, did Superman and the others fail to spearhead the American war effort? Clark Kent was, after all, an American. Think what it might have done for GI morale if Superman had squashed a dozen Panzer tanks into a ball and dropped it on Göring's head. Or if Batman had busted in on fifty Nip warlords stretched on their yellow bellies plotting fiendish tortures while tiny-toed Geishas trod on their slimey backs.

There are domestic political questions as well, like why no one has treated the McCarthyite figure of Captain America, witchhunting across a bleak countryside for "the vicious elements who seek to overthrow the U.S. Government." The John Birch Society had its forerunner in the "Sentinels of Liberty" which one could join for a dime and help Captain America "in his war against the spies and enemies in our midst who threaten our very independence. . . ." Promising stuff here for a seminar on The Making of American Zealotry, 1964. And there are dozens of functional rather than substantive issues that Mr. Feiffer chose not to discuss, like why most comic heroes had blue hair. *Blue*. Or how The Human Torch turned his flame on. Granted, these matters are of less than great social moment but they are not without interest.

I want to make clear that I am not faulting Mr. Feiffer for the book he did not write. The book he did has enough problems of its own, not the least of them its free-form punctuation and inventive spelling. As a little memoir of his days as a comic-strip artist, it is amusing enough, if

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chaotic—he constantly mixes his own experiences in with his critical comments. But what really troubles me is that America's most distinguished satirical cartoonist should shortchange the medium that spawned his talent: Feiffer fails to ascribe literary value to the comic book as an art form (and this value, it should be added at once, has nothing to do with current pseudo-Camp nostalgia). "Comic books, first of all are junk," writes Feiffer (and I have yet to determine the syntax of those first two words if he insists on that comma after them). "Junk is a second-class citizen of the arts. . . . There are certain inherent privileges in second-class citizenship. Irresponsibility is one. Not being taken seriously is another. . . . The success of the best junk lies in its ability to come close, but not too close; to titillate without touching us. To arouse without giving satisfaction." He concludes that comic books are viewed fondly in retrospect by those of us who grew up on them as "samples of our youthful innocence instead of our youthful corruption" and that compared to the junk we're surrounded with as adults ("our architecture, our highways, our advertisements, our mass media, our politics . . . even the air we breathe, flying black chunks of it"), they were pretty decent junk.

A real champion of the comic book might not unreasonably have made far more sweeping claims for it, like (1) it was a fantastically inventive form which (2) required a high degree of participation by the young reader in whom, ideally, (3) it developed a rudimentary sort of literary—or, if you will, sub-literary—taste. What a spectacular gallery of whirling, winged, superbly endowed heroes were splashed across those blotchy pages! What resourceful and magnificently malignant villains were ranged against them! What violence and butchery were regularly exhibited before our wide eyes! It was not only junk—it was a whole literature! It not only asked our willing suspension of disbelief—it compelled it! And its unslacking hyperbole even steeled us a little for the immense and terrible cruelty of the world we were to inherit.

Richard Kluger

JASPER JOHNS
LEO CASTELLI N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

YUGOSLAV REPORT

WRITERS AND CONFERENCES

I came to the PEN congress in Bled last summer with a well why not attitude, easy to adopt if one is going, all expenses paid, to one's first literary congress (curiosity), and it's taking place by a lake at the foot of the Julian Alps in northern Yugoslavia (vacation-lust). It was almost too easy to be cynical. The official theme of the congress was that venerable catch-all "The Writer and Contemporary Society," and, as W. H. Auden (who was invited and didn't come) is reported to have written to Stephen Spender (who did come), surely in the last thirty years everything that can be said on *that* subject has been said. Of course. Yes, the writer has the right to absolute freedom of expression, protected by the law, and access to publication; his right to be politically disengaged, asocial, morally heretical, or just plain irresponsible must be zealously defended. Yes, writing and writers flourish when they have some sense of responsible connection with the life of their societies; writers are also citizens, educators, guardians of language, etc. What more could be done than to recite truisms, to glance fondly from "on the one hand" to "on the other"? And PEN? What was that? In New York: a joke, a bore, something to be polite to. Monthly postcards announcing cocktail parties at the Hotel Pierre on which one might be improbably promised the chance to meet at one fell swoop Virginia Kirkus, William Burroughs, and Isaac Bashevis Singer? Expensive dinners at the Overseas Press Club with dessert a lecture on how to write articles for travel magazines, or a panel discussion on whether the modern novel is going "too far"? And if the activities of the American PEN are rather remote from literature as an art, what would an international PEN congress do but compound the distance?

The truth is, the recent PEN congress did have little to do with literature. And how could it have been otherwise? One does not become a member of PEN because one is a good writer, but simply because one is a writer. Everyone there ("*P*oets, *E*ssayists, *N*ovelists") was a writer. There were top drawer personages like Stephen Spender, Arthur Miller, Ignazio Silone, Pablo Neruda, Richard Hughes, Ivo Andric, and Rosa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mond Lehmann. (Ionesco promised but failed to show up; Charles Olson came on the last day.) But what one noticed was the absence of all the star novelists, poets, and playwrights who had been invited and had turned PEN down. Of those who did come there seemed to be a disproportionate number of critics and of writers who are regularly connected to institutions, inured to the professional reasonableness of committees. Spender is an editor of *Encounter,* and currently at the Library of Congress; Vladimir Dedijer is not only Vladimir Dedijer but has also taught at the University of Manchester and several American universities; Jean Blot (from France) and José Angel Valente (from Spain) both work for UNESCO; Pablo Fernández (from Cuba) is his country's cultural attaché in London; and there were also Roger Caillois, editor of *Diogenes,* Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary,* Jean Bloch-Michel, literary editor of *Preuves,* Robie Macauley, editor of *Kenyon Review,* Ivan Boldizsár, editor of *The New Hungarian Quarterly* (an excellent magazine, printed in English, which more American intellectuals should read), and university-based critics like Jan Kott, of the University of Warsaw, and Roger Shattuck, of the University of Texas. And then there were the PEN masses, legions of obscure toilers, busy on their eighth novel, their travel articles, their childrens' books, their mystery stories. These were the "lady writers" (the celebrity-writers' throwaway label for all of them, male and female), invariably middle-aged or elderly, who filled the plenary sessions held in the large hall, adjusting their plastic earphones to tune in the speeches translated into English and French (the official languages of the congress), collecting autographs from the celebrity-writers, dutifully taking all the tours and consuming the endless food and drink provided by the Slovene PEN center, lavishly generous hosts to the congress. A writer is a writer.

Discussions about literature useful to writers as poets, essayists and novelists were, then, conspicuously absent; their surrogates were speeches about "The Importance of Literature Today" and "Mass Communication." Sharing few assumptions about their art, particularly the level at which it was to be practiced, the writers were called on to consider themselves as diagnosticians of culture. And a pretty amateurish lot in this role they proved to be. Early on during the congress, the members found in their hotel mail slots the following questionnaire—which I am quoting verbatim—made up by two Yugoslav weekly magazines, *TT* of Ljubljana and *Svet* of Belgrade:

> 1. What are the most important ideological and philosophical trends of the world at present (Marxism, Buddhism, Existentialism, etc.) and which is the strongest integrative force?
> 2. What is the real root of the East-West conflict, and what of the North-South conflict?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

3. How do you conceive of the involvement of the artist in the modern world?
4. Does the march of civilization (automation, affluence) cause the crisis of culture or merely the crisis of traditional forms of culture?
5. Two thousand years ago a philosopher said that the fate of the world depended on the marriage of the mind and the power. Is this philosopher's thought still walid today?
6. Which thought or idea, whether expressed by yourself or somebody else at Bled, did most appeal to you, and which one you thought the most objectionable?

To be sure, the speeches were not quite on this ambitious Hyman Kaplan level. But many did not lag behind, even if their high-minded rhetoric was supplemented by a lot of mysterious cultural information. One learned that Sartre has lost favor with Polish intellectual youth for what they take to be his over-politicized reaction to the Nobel award, but that Camus and Kafka remain idols, with Salinger bringing up the rear; that Sartre remains extremely influential in Brazil; that Kafka is *demodé* in Hungary; that John Updike is coming up strong among young Russian readers; and that in Holland there are many novels on "the Jewish problem" but plays are taken more seriously than novels.

But what is really worth reporting about the congress is something else that took place, something which had unexpectedly (for me, at least) its extraordinary moments. Human beings from many countries came together as men of good will, because as writers they are self-appointed citizens of that hypothetical civilized world order that seems farther than ever from being realized, despite all the predictions that were fashionable twenty, even ten years ago about the imminent demise of the era of nation-states. And the spirit of fraternity at the Bled congress, however flimsily based on the pretext of a common vocation, was extremely moving. That spirit was, perhaps, a mixture of conscientious tact, of curiosity—and wonder, wonder and relief that we were talking to each other and that nothing awful or unpleasant was happening. For most of us *have* been sold a bill of goods—by our governments, by our prejudices, or by our own sophistication. When one was able to repress the easy smile that such verbal doings as I've described above induced in those of us assembled at Bled who are too sophisticated to be so solemn, one had a chance to discover one's own provincialism and complacency.

Can a regularly published American writer, busy with his own work, really imagine what it's like to run the risk of exile, persecution, imprisonment for what he writes? Probably not, until he goes abroad, meets such a writer in the flesh, and stays up with him talking until four in the morning. In New York one could never anticipate the pleasure and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dismay one feels lingering over coffee to answer ardent, naïve, very well-informed questions about the history of *Partisan Review* or recent off-Broadway theater put to one by a young writer from Belgrade or Sofia who has never been further west than Bled. Not until one sees it going on at the next table can one grasp what it means for writers from West and East Germany, who have no other chance of meeting, to sit together and talk; after the first such impromptu gathering, one East German writer is reported to have been close to tears. No matter that a writer's club is, at best, a diversion, at worst an irrelevance, in the permissive quarrelsome literary capitals of New York, London and Paris. It does mean, in many cases has meant or could mean, a great deal in Warsaw, Montevideo, Accra, Havana, Tunis, Vientiane, Karachi. During the fifties, at the height of the Cold War, PEN was the only instrument for any regular dialogue between intellectuals of Communist and non-Communist countries. This dialogue is scarcely less useful during the perilous *détente* of the sixties, to them and to us. The comfortable certainty with which "Western" liberals espouse the writer's privilege to decline to serve as a spokesman for any particular moral or social point of view reveals, in many cases, a lack of imagination. Only change the verb: what if the writer is not "serving" but "preserving"? One of the congress' more instructive moments came when a Czech writer arose to argue for the writer's duty as a moralist and educator—not, as one immediately expected, because writers should help build socialism or work for world peace, but because they are needed to uphold the values of liberal individualism in a collectivist society.

PEN has always had the reputation of being "outside politics," which accounts for its strength and survival in Eastern Europe. Yet there is no doubt the function, purpose, *raison d'être* of PEN—whether it's admitted or not—*is* a political one: to liberalize the writer's situation. Since its founding in the early twenties by a wealthy Englishwoman, Mrs. C. A. Dawson-Scott, on the model of the new international parliaments that came into being after World War I, PEN has been dominated by its English center (John Galsworthy was the first international president) and devoted to discreet pressure on less liberty-loving countries to leave their writers alone. Resolutions passed at the annual congresses are one technique. The most memorable of these was at the 1933 congress in Dubrovnik when, under the international presidency of H. G. Wells, the assembled members debated, then formally denounced the new Nazi government for book-burning and racism and the Berlin PEN center for expelling its Communist members, and part of the German delegation walked out. In recent years, Spain and Portugal have come in for a ritual drubbing. At this congress, the usual resolution was passed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

condemning censorship in these two countries, and particularly singling out the Spanish government's suppression of outlets for Catalan writers and refusal to permit one of its dissident writers and a guest of honor at the congress, José Bergamin, to make the trip to Yugoslavia. But most of PEN's effective work, one gathers, takes place behind the scenes. David Carver, the organization's international secretary for the last fifteen years (the only full-time salaried official of PEN) and president of the English center as well, is credited with getting out of prison and, in a number of cases, saving the lives of eighteen Hungarian writers in 1956. He is also said to have been instrumental, through communication with Alexei Surkov, head of the Soviet Writers Union, in securing the release from prison of Olga Ivinskaya, Pasternak's former secretary, and her daughter, soon after they were sentenced to seven years for currency offenses. And to cite only one more instance, among many that are reliably reported, he tried to do something about the editor and two assistant editors of a South Korean newspaper who were sentenced to *death* for publishing an editorial advocating cultural, not political, contacts with North Korea. (The American PEN tried to get Washington to intervene; the editor was executed, the two assistant editors are still in jail.)

The specter that hung over the PEN congress this time was, of course, the case of Mihajlo Mihajlov, the young Yugoslav academic who had been sentenced to nine months in jail for his outspoken account of the Stalin era and the not exactly impetuous progress of de-Stalinization, "Moscow Summer 1964." I imagine a good many delegates to PEN came to Yugoslavia prepared to raise a row over Mihajlov, but just a few days before the congress opened the appeals court acquitted Mihajlov of one of the two charges, and suspended his sentence. It was scarcely as complete a victory as one would have liked, not only because Mihajlov was not wholly cleared but, more important, because no firm precedent was established. Yet I met no Yugoslav literary bureaucrat, of which there were many at the congress, who did not deplore the persecution of Mihajlov. And there seems no doubt that the verdict of the appeals court was partly, or even mainly, due to the imminent arrival of PEN, and to the quiet pre-congress negotiations between Carver and Matej Bor, head of the Slovene PEN center; Bor is said to have intervened decisively on Mihajlov's behalf.

Of course, one can cite plenty of distressing instances where PEN has been silent. Where was the PEN resolution in the fifties when Arthur Miller's passport was taken away for six years, when Lillian Hellman was threatened with jail, when Dashiell Hammett and a number of other writers actually were imprisoned? Where are the PEN resolu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions protesting the insulting and inhuman treatment of Soviet writers of the stature of Anna Akhmatova? I can't fathom why PEN didn't speak out for the American writers. But as for its not raising a storm over the plight of the writers in Communist countries, the answer again seems to be that PEN is a political organization. It pushes where it can hope to accomplish something. In the case of the Russians, wholesale denunciation would accomplish little except make the denouncers feel more virtuous, but, say, the establishment of PEN centers in the Soviet Union might indeed lead to an easing of conditions there. And this prospect, which seems close to realization, supplied the principal drama of the recent congress. For the first time, the Soviet Union sent a delegation of "observers," a big step toward joining PEN, setting up centers in the largest Russian cities, and participating as regular members in next year's congress.

It was not simply the presence of the seven Russian observers that augured well, but the fact that the delegation agreed, after much soul-searching, to split up, and participate singly, each out of the watchful surveillance of the others, at the five *tables rondes,* or seminars, organized by Keith Botsford, which took place in a small building near the congress hall and overlapped with the large speechifying plenary sessions. (These seminars were a new feature of PEN congresses, and had many veteran members angrily complaining that PEN was being divided into first- and second-class citizens—which it was—and that the small rooms and the scheduling of the seminars made it virtually impossible for other PEN members even to audit—which it did. Each seminar had about ten participants. Their composition rotated among a specially invited fifty out of the more than four hundred PEN members who came to Bled, and included virtually all the famous writers at the congress.) And take part the Russians did, at first shyly and watchfully, and eventually gaining the full confidence of their clichés. For PEN didn't get Anna Akhmatova or Andrey Voznesensky or Aleksandr Solzhenitzyn, who were invited. We got Surkov himself, some critics and professors, and only one writer of some note, the novelist Leonid Leonov. These were big bulky elderly men, full of exhausting affability, who turned out a kind of endless verbal bubble gum. The other members, including those from Eastern Europe, generally treated them with an eager and slightly guilty politeness that made one think of upper-middle-class white children in a newly integrated liberal private school welcoming and trying to put at ease a small troupe of mentally defective children from Harlem. The way the Russians talked—all that they did not respond to or jovially evaded—was terribly depressing. Yet they were there. That was what mattered. And if we did nothing to excite their paranoia, maybe next

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time they would send us their real writers.

Anyone, then, who came to Bled looking for a high-level exchange among professionals must judge the congress a flop. The only exacting literary paper was one on Robbe-Grillet given by Jean Bloch-Michel, an excellent piece of work which had nothing to do with anything else that was going on; the first day of the congress, Stephen Spender made an unexpected and warmly received plea for daily readings of poetry, which were tried but never really got off the ground. However, if one succumbed to the idea that being a writer creates strategic occasions for being a valuable amateur—at world citizenship? at self-transcendence?—the congress was elating, troubling, funny, touching, worthwhile. I, for one, having arrived at the congress as a surreptitious tourist to Yugoslavia, left an ardent PENnik.

Yet, the ambiguities of PEN's role remain—and with respect to these, PEN seems to be at a turning point. Arthur Miller, the new international president, elected at this congress, offers PEN the prospect of new life—which it badly needs after the disastrous absentee-presidency of Alberto Moravia, during which period PEN almost foundered, and the caretaker-presidency of Victor van Vriesland. (International presidents serve three years.) But the life that Miller wants to infuse into PEN may dilute the organization. It is clearly Miller's intention to do two things. (1) Revive the American PEN, which is, for all serious purposes, an empty shell. (2) Increase the representation of the Asians and Africans. Up to now, PEN has been largely a European affair—plus the United States and a few Latin American countries and Japan, with only a token representation from other continents. Something of the coming de-Europeanization is evident from the site of the future congresses. The one this year will take place in New York (June 12-17); the 1967 one in Bangalore; Senegal and the Ivory Coast are vying to play host to the one after that. PEN congresses are expensive—the one in London in 1956 cost about ten thousand pounds—and just about all the European capitals have had one. (Since its founding, only four congresses have taken place outside of Europe: in New York in 1924, in Buenos Aires in 1936, in Tokyo in 1957, and in Rio de Janeiro in 1960). And it is idle to pretend that the de-Europeanization of PEN will not have profound consequences.

As it becomes more and more truly an international parliament, PEN seems bound to become more "political" and even less a forum for discussion about literature. In all honesty, how much writing of high quality is there in Asia and Africa? How far can the notion of a writer be stretched? One disgruntled English writer told me in Bled that the PEN center in British Guiana is made up mainly of local newspaper-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men; the good West Indian writers, he says, are all in London. And, that question aside (for the difficulty may be just our insularity and ignorance), it still remains true that the kinds of things European writers can say to African and Asian writers must be vaguer, less concretely about literature, than those European, American and Latin American writers can say to each other. As the artistic assumptions shared by PEN members are diluted even further by stepped-up internationalization, there is the danger that discourse at the congresses will sink into Basic Esperanto, with the same words meaning different things to everyone there.

This is a problem that won't be solved, say, by having more regional congresses. PEN has to find a way to remain reliably and respectably literary—to become that far more so than it is—if it is also to play, on a still wider stage, its half-quixotic, half-eminently practical "political" role. But the problem is not, I think, insoluble. A strong start on it could be made by pruning some of the dead branches and twigs among the individual PEN members, and by encouraging local centers to set standards for admission beyond that of mere appearance in print. As the extremely promising inauguration of the *tables rondes* at the Bled congress indicates, some such search for a more aristocratic constitution of PEN is already underway.

Susan Sontag

Sappho: Poems and Fragments

Translated, with an Introduction, by Guy Davenport

Sappho sang of Eros and Aphrodite, of graceful youths with bronzed bodies and flowing hair. She sang of trees and flowers and love in an age of gold. In Guy Davenport's unique translations the elegance and supple grace of Sappho's lyrics are re-created for the modern reader.

"...there is real distinction in the writing and a refreshing freedom from the self-conscious tone, vacillating between pretentiousness and archness, which spoils most attempts to do Sappho."—*Richmond Lattimore*

"Sharp, bright, above all essentially *strange*, these versions convince us for the first time in English that Sappho's voice comes from a world piercingly unlike our own, but with so articulate an identity that we recognize it in the least fragment."
—*Hugh Kenner*

128 pages illustrated $3.95

The University of Michigan Press
Ann Arbor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . coming . . .

Nathalie Sarraute on Flaubert
Irving Howe on Radical Criticism
Frank Kermode on Susan Sontag
Linguistics and Literature by Erich Auerbach
Diana Trilling on Truman Capote
The New Negro by Elliott Skinner
Civilization: The Lesser Evil by George Lichtheim
Jack Ludwig on Automation
Ideas of the Future by Edward Shils
Andrei Sinyavsky on Boris Pasternak
F. W. Dupee on Ezra Pound
Theater, Movies, and Ballet:
Marshall Cohen, Annette Michelson, and Robert Garis

. . . and . . .

Henry D. Aiken, Leo Bersani, Norman Birnbaum, John Malcolm Brinnin, Lewis A. Coser, Donald Davie, Michael Harrington, Merlyn S. Pitzele, William Righter, Frederick Seidel, and others

My check enclosed for ☐ 5 issues at $4.50 ☐ 9 issues at $8.50
Bill me for ☐ 4 issues at $4.50 ☐ 8 issues at $8.50

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

☐ new subscription ☐ please extend my subscription when it expires

166

Special student offer:

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

My check enclosed for ☐ 4 issues at $3.50 ☐ 8 issues at $6.50

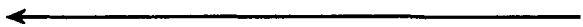
I am a student at .....

166

Send all subscriptions to:
PARTISAN REVIEW, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A lot of people talk about **PR.**
Some people read it.
A few even subscribe.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

MEMORIES OF SOME THINGS PAST

STARTING OUT IN THE THIRTIES. By Alfred Kazin. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $4.95.

Alfred Kazin's latest book summons up some interesting and important personalities from the period of the thirties when he was getting started as a literary critic. John Chamberlain, who "looked like a Yale man's idea of a Yale man," Malcolm Cowley, who "resembled Hemingway in much the same way that matinee idols once resembled Clark Gable," V. F. Calverton ("a round, kindly, swarthy, eager man, curiously distracted, with flowing energy") and a "crisp Vassar girl with [an] Irish jaw" named Mary McCarthy are all recognizably here, along with a number of their radical friends and enemies, husbands and mistresses. Yet if Kazin's word-sketches are unfailingly recognizable, they are also disappointingly predictable. Almost never do they extend our previous understanding of the people whom they depict. The evocation of John Chamberlain is only a diluted imitation of Mary McCarthy's brilliantly acid "portrait of the artist as a Yale man," while Kazin's Calverton is a more friendly but far less memorable character than the literary commissar named V. F. Calvert who stalks the pages of John Dos Passos' *Most Likely to Succeed*. The summary estimate of Mary McCarthy as "a wholly destructive critical mind" merely echoes a cocktail-party cliché of the late forties and early fifties. The portrait of Cowley briefly promises a greater subtlety and freshness, but by the time Kazin moves from his early awe of Cowley's well-tailored Harvard manner and literary assurance to the confession that he did not like this man, he has unaccountably lost interest in Cowley and does not spell out the reasons for his aversion—which is too bad, because the opportunism of Cowley's career, his uncanny ability (rivaled only by Archibald MacLeish's) to be with the right cause at the right time, has long cried out for critical attention.

The honesty and the beauty of Kazin's memoir emerge only when he turns away from the luminaries of the New York intelligentsia and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tells us about his mother, his cousin Sophie and himself. "With my mother," Kazin writes in a passage that with the exception of E. E. Cummings' famous letter about his father is the most moving tribute to a parent in modern American writing, "every morsel of life was paid for in fear. You calculated the price of everything before you bought it, and even if you bought it, you could not enjoy it for thinking how much it had cost you. . . . In my mother's world no one ever shrugged her shoulders; no one was ever bored or lazy; no one was ever cynical; no one ever laughed. She was an indentured servant of the emotions, and always a slave to other people. . . . I seemed always to see her bent to someone's service. . . ." The "proud and flashing loneliness" of Sophie, wasting her days in vain wait for a suitor to carry her out of her unwed misery, is also tellingly conveyed. And from the very first sentence of the book, in which Kazin describes himself as "desolately" on his way home to Brooklyn after having completed his course at City College, *Starting Out in the Thirties* registers a devastating sense of personal isolation. Socialism, Kazin says, was an article of faith for him and for everyone he knew, but if he dreamed of a new community, if he passionately responded to the acts of personal solidarity that Silone was describing in *Fontamara* and Malraux in *Man's Fate,* Kazin nevertheless inhabited a world in which he felt as useless and driven "as an alley cat," in which reading novels and going to newsreel theaters defined his relationship to the forces of history, in which emotional hunger finally drove him into an "unspoken engagement" with a girl named Nora whom he did not love and into marriage with a girl named Natasha whose own "immense loneliness" matched his own, but whose heart he admits he was ignorant of.

Yet within a paragraph of Kazin's magnificently candid and revealing assessment of the terms of his first marriage, his narrative suddenly and inexplicably clams up. With a truly Hawthornesque evasiveness, Kazin says it was during this period (1938-1939) that he began work, "at the instigation of Carl Van Doren," on a book on modern American writing. No other motive for the creation of *On Native Grounds* is offered—and subsequent allusions to the book cast no light whatsoever on what was surely the most important intellectual and emotional commitment of Kazin's young life, involving the profoundest issues of personal and social identity. Such issues have been at stake in the careers of other literary critics of our time who have chosen to focus their energies on American literature, and the fact that a great deal more than intellectual curiosity or literary taste has been involved in their choice has lent to the modern criticism of American literature its special

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intensity—and contributed to the tragic vulnerability of some of its most brilliant practitioners. Who cannot hear the note of personal urgency in F. O. Matthiessen's dedication of *American Renaissance* to the two men "who have taught me most about the possibilities of life in America," or in Perry Miller's account in *Errand into the Wilderness* of how he decided, while working in a river town on the edge of the African jungle, to return to America and give his life to unraveling the meaning of its civilization? Who has not felt in reading Newton Arvin's description of Melville's alienation or in Stephen Whicher's discovery of the unsuspected depths of Emerson's anxiety that he was in the presence of a personal testament as well as an objective study? When Van Wyck Brooks related, in *Days of the Phoenix,* how his years of debating with himself about America through the medium of his books on the Puritan spirit and various aspects of our nineteenth-century culture climaxed in a nervous breakdown that visited upon his mind nightmarish images of Henry James, he indicated the force of the tensions that lies behind much of the very best of what has been written about American literature across the last forty years. *Starting Out in the Thirties* gives a poignant account of the alienation that Alfred Kazin felt in a period which was crucial for him personally and for America in general. But in failing to tell us how the dream of *On Native Grounds* originated in and drew sustenance from the desire to transcend that alienation, Kazin has deprived his autobiography of its central drama.

Kenneth S. Lynn

THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

THE MOTORCYCLE. By André Pieyre de Mandiargues. Translated by Richard Howard. Grove Press. $3.95.
THE INTERROGATION. By J. M. G. Le Clézio. Translated by Daphne Woodward. Atheneum. $4.50.

André Pieyre de Mandiargues is a superbly evocative writer who has only recently gained a measure of general recognition in France. The publication in 1963 of *La Motocyclette*—his first novel and in many ways his most accessible work—seems to have had the admirable effect of creating a wider audience for the extraordinarily interesting short stories he has been publishing since 1946. The tales collected in *Le Musée noir, Soleil des loups, Feu de braise, Marbre,* and,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most recently, *Porte dévergondée*, do, however, appear consciously offered to the delectation of a happy few: the pose of the narrator is that of an esoteric anthropologist and *collectionneur*, the discoverer and prestidigitator of strange and marvelous psychic rituals. Mandiargues is in fact both an amateur anthropologist and an intensely intelligent tourist; his fictions typically take their departure from a "curiosity" discovered, then evolve toward a rigidly ordered delirium evoked with a remarkable sensuous concretion. The delirium, like the curiosity, is usually of erotic provenance: at the center of Mandiargues' world is sensuality in its most self-conscious, sumptuous, self-reflexive form. For the inhabitants of this world, eroticism is the ritual of pleasure and liberation, the cultivation and celebration of an individual's vitality.

Mandiargues' earliest literary allegiance was to Surrealism, and the atmosphere of his stories evidently owes something to Breton, Souppault and Aragon, as well as to Mandiargues' favorite painter, Chirico. But not only does he possess to a supreme degree the power to transform reality into an hallucination where the fearful and disgusting are sensuously fused with the beautiful, he is a baroque craftsman who, unlike the Surrealists, is not reticent to demonstrate his precise intellectual control of his material. His style is elegant, even *précieux*, and the urbane, intelligent, witty voice which dominates his tales determines that our posture as readers shall be a worldly curiosity embracing both terror and humor. Mandiargues evidently relishes a certain deceptive quality inherent to most of his tales, their tendency finally to vaporize in an uncertain world where it is difficult to distinguish the banal from the extraordinary; the narrative presence reasserts itself, to leave us with the voice of the collector, the slightly eccentric aristocrat.

While *The Motorcycle*, unlike Mandiargues' other fiction, must be counted a novel by virtue of its effort to trace an individual's destiny, as well as its length, it is tacitly posited on the author's recognition that he is not really engaged with this destiny, that the individuality of his character really doesn't matter. His heroine is called Rebecca Nul, as if to emphasize her subjection to the erotic ceremony which, variously recalled and rehearsed, lies at the center of the novel: her submission to her lover, Daniel Lionart (who, one must note, constitutes the most serious failure of the book: a sort of anodyne, playboy Sade, a pallid development of some of the delightful libertines of the stories), from whom she received, the day of her marriage to the schoolteacher Raymond Nul, a huge black Harley-Davidson designed to carry her to their trysts. The texture of the novel is created from such a trip, and at the center of the book, the motorcycle is intensely alive. Alive as a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mechanical object, dominated by Rebecca, subject to its rider's control through a precisely described manipulation of gears and levers, and alive as a mythical presence: the cylinders exploding between Rebecca's thighs constitute the heartbeat of a bull-monster whose power bears her headlong from the France of her pedagogue husband across the Rhine to the castle of the enchanter prince, the erotic artist who releases the powers inherent in the mad ride.

In a style which fuses a plastic imaginative power to an almost pedantic mechanical exactitude, Mandiargues achieves an impressive sensuous evocation of riding the motorcycle. He holds us close to its vibrant existence as both machine and beast, establishes its necessary relationship to the moment of sensuality—rehearsed with the memory of past moments—toward which Rebecca rides, the moment in virtue of which rider and mount exist, when Daniel, on the terrace of his castle, beside the machine fallen silent, will pull the zipper of her motorcycle suit—her sleek, fur-lined black "hide," beneath which she wears nothing—and she will step forth naked and submissive. But the nearly intolerable sensual rhythm of the motorcycle finally creates another destiny: Rebecca's soaring annihilation against the obscenely gay face of a painted Bacchus who advertises beer on the tailgate of a truck, the destruction of pleasure in a travesty of its excess.

It is, finally, the moment, in its atemporal sensuous fullness, its ritual self-celebration, that most matters to Mandiargues. And this in part accounts for one's feeling that *The Motorcycle* is not his best production. Its existence within the temporal dimension, Rebecca's constant shuffling of past, present and future journeys and pleasures, is somewhat artificial and occasionally tedious. The instantaneous nature of the short story, its insistent movement toward a terminal moment, is more perfectly suited to his manner and his concerns. Still, *The Motorcycle* is a highly entertaining and attractive performance; and since its qualities have largely been preserved in Richard Howard's extremely accurate—if not always sufficiently elegant—translation,[1] it remains a good way to begin a reading of Mandiargues, which seems to me a pleasure worth cultivating.

Unlike Mandiargues, who has only gradually conquered a public, J. M. G. Le Clézio arrived in 1963, at the age of twenty-three, as a sort of literary bonus baby. The publication of his first novel, *Le Procès-verbal,* constituted the major French literary "event" of recent years.

1 It is worth noting that one of Mandiargues' longest tales—and a very good one—*Le Lis de mer,* was translated a few years ago, by Mr. Howard, under the title *The Girl Beneath the Lion*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For many critics, the novel seemed to answer the question that they had been posing, rather inanely, in frequent *enquêtes*: what was to follow the *nouveau roman* of Robbe-Grillet, Butor and Nathalie Sarraute? Le Clézio, undoubtedly influenced by these masters, yet clearly uncontaminated by the philosophical jargon of any coterie, seemed an important new manifestation in a tradition of rigidly uncompromising experimental fiction.

Like Robbe-Grillet before him, Le Clézio takes as an initial premise the need to renew our perception of the world, to view phenomena from a new and starkly nonlogical, noncausative standpoint. *Le Procès-verbal,* as its French title suggests (Daphne Woodward's English substitution, *The Interrogation,* seems to me, like much of her rather stilted translation, to miss the point), is an affidavit of experience, a careful record of the movements and sensations of a man called Adam Pollo who is uncertain whether he has just left the insane asylum or the army. Adam has attempted to strip himself of the impedimenta of culture; he lives a life of immediate, primitive, preverbal contact with objects, a life of non-egoism and pure being. With concentration, he can feel himself metamorphosed into a white rat, or he can reverse the processes of evolution and become a lichen clinging to a rock. He follows a dog through the city streets, looking forward to a time when he too may be able to "urinate placidly against the hubs of American cars or the 'No Parking' signs and make love in the open air, on the dusty footpath, between two plane trees."

Life in a world of nonreferential experience does not, however, seem to be totally possible. Adam himself is tempted by words—he writes letters he never sends—and by personal relationships. It is his desperate need to explain, the temptation to verbalize his sensations, it would seem, that drives him to harangue a crowd in the street, be arrested for an unspecified "indecent display," and finish in a mental ward, a womb which marks the failure of his attempt to communicate his vision. In the hospital, under the questioning of a psychiatrist, he does begin to provide a systematic verbal explanation of his perceptions—which is at the same time an explanation of our complicity with this oddly sympathetic figure—but the attempt ends in aphasia, collapse and a psychiatric diagnosis.

The diagnosis is relevant only in verbal, cultural and social terms, that is, irrelevant to the protagonist's, and the novelist's, demand for a conversion of our perceptual systems. What is most admirable about *The Interrogation* is its effort to situate the reader in a universe dense with sensations precisely and literally evoked, and to prevent his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drawing the normal conclusions from them, to destroy the chain of inductive reasoning from phenomena. Such, even more radically, is the central concern of many of the stories in *La Fièvre,* the collection Le Clézio published last year, where, for example, the dislocation of the universe produced by the sensation of toothache is elaborated with a delirious exactitude.

The stories of *La Fièvre* frequently strike one as mere exercises in the rendering of sensation, and parts of *The Interrogation* give the same effect. Le Clézio never seems insincere, or merely fashionable, or silly, but he is often weighty, boring, and pretentious. His novel, despite its greater commitment to human concerns and its greater density of life, is as a whole less compelling than Robbe-Grillet's best performances. *The Interrogation* is not the masterpiece it has been proclaimed, but something better well might come from its author: the most hopeful thing about Le Clézio—as the different approaches tried in *La Fièvre* indicate—is that he has not yet found a "manner," and may be expected to continue experimenting.

Peter Brooks

MYTH MAKING

A NATURAL PERSPECTIVE: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance. By Northrop Frye. Columbia University Press. $3.75.

Northrop Frye is a formidable critic for a reviewer to present, let alone disagree with. He is formidable in more than one respect: in the range of his reading in English and the Classical literatures, in his detailed and ready knowledge of Shakespeare's comedies (which most of us find much more elusive than the tragedies), in the multiple "structures" he invents, and in the masterly strategy with which he disarms criticism. In *A Natural Perspective,* as in the *Anatomy of Criticism,* Frye astutely warns us in advance that he is doing one kind of thing and not another, that he is exploring the structure of the comedies and of comedy in general, not offering detailed interpretations of single plays. If the reader nevertheless feels uncomfortable, he must agree ruefully that his objections are out of order, at least for the duration of the argument.

There are signs in *A Natural Perspective* of another and a less awesome figure, a humane teacher and sensible reader, who will take time for an amusing digression:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> . . . There was a composer Raimondi who in 1852 composed three oratorios that were performed on successive nights, and then performed simultaneously, all three being in counterpoint with each other. The applause was so tremendous that Raimondi fainted, and was dead within a year, but his prodigious feat appears to have died with him.

Frye, the humanist and critic of education, easily wins our admiration and respect. He owes something to Arnold, but he improves on Arnold by refusing to turn culture into a religious or political creed. "The anatomy of culture," as he generously defines it, "is the total body of imaginative hypothesis in a society and its tradition." But both humor and humanism tend to disappear when Frye strikes an *O altitudo* before his favorite "imaginative hypothesis," of myth as a means for recovering in literature some of the magical power of ritual.

Though we recognize that Shakespeare is not a writer of purely ironic comedy of Molière's kind, and though we grant (reluctantly) the analogy between serious comedy and the *Commedia,* we may feel as we read *A Natural Perspective* that Malvolio has got the better of Sir Toby, that there are to be no more cakes and ale—an impression that is surprising in view of the position from which Frye attacks his subject. He begins with a "dichotomy" that makes all critics either *Iliad* critics or *Odyssey* critics: those who are most interested in "tragedy, realism and irony," in literature as a criticism of life; and those who are "attracted to comedy and romance," who read for sheer delight in the self-contained conventional pattern of a work. The argument that follows, both in its historical and formal features, is fairly familiar. The model for Shakespearean comedy, inherited from Plautus and Terence, is the typical formula of Greek New Comedy in which two young lovers, after being opposed by cantankerous elders and arbitrary laws, are at length joined in marriage. This pattern is defined on a more abstract psychological level as "the comic drive to identity," whether social, in which a "new society crystallizes around the marriage of the central characters," or individual, "an awaking to self-knowledge, which is typically a release from a humor or a mechanical form of behavior." As might be anticipated, the conventional patterns are traced back to myth, which in turn is descended from ritual. The mythical and ritual patterns are "popular" in the sense of "primitive," that is, they belong to earlier social orders and to modes of behavior associated with them. The typical mythical pattern in all comedy, increasingly evident in Shakespeare's career, is the cycle moving from death to rebirth. In the Romances, we are to see a kind of grand recapitulation of earlier Shake-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spearean conventions and patterns (there are still others I have not mentioned). There is also a new emphasis on the cycle of rebirth, and especially on "the return from the sea," the dark area of chaos and unreason. Such, in a crude reduction, is the structure of Shakespearean comedy.

The outline is hardly adequate to Frye's presentation, either in its strength or weakness. The strength, it seems to me, lies in the negative and cautionary rather than in the more positive phases. The two earlier chapters, with their warnings against the danger of forgetting the formal, conventional character of all comedy are highly recommended to readers and critics. Frye rightly insists that we must not overlook the conventional character of the comedies of Shakespeare in particular, that we need to "keep the genre in mind as an essential part of the critical context," that we should not try to find moral allegories, but be content with the "concrete" stuff of each play. He protests against those who would assign particular beliefs to Shakespeare, and he shrewdly points out that the beliefs we infer are often determined by dramatic structure. But in asserting that "Shakespeare had no values, no principles of anything except dramatic structure," he is in danger of throwing out the baby with the bath. There is a possibility, as we shall see, that the theory may leave no place for significance of any sort: the structure is the structure is the structure. Even in these earlier chapters difficulties begin to appear that are traceable to the initial dichotomy and the temptation it invites to further oversimplifications.

Having divided critics into two camps, Frye makes a corresponding division between writers of comedy, setting Shakespeare in opposition to Jonson, Shaw and other writers who offer direct criticisms of manners and morals. While insisting on the stylized character of Shakespearean comedy, Frye disregards the stylization of Jonsonian comedy, and while noting the operatic features of plays like *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest,* he seems unaware of the operatic mode of *Man and Superman, Misalliance* and *Heartbreak House,* to name only the more obvious examples. It might be argued that Shaw is more consistently operatic in his technique than Shakespeare, and it is worth recalling what Shaw himself said, that in time his plays would live not by the ideas they presented, but by their form. On Frye's own principles, it is no easier to determine *from the plays* what Shaw believed than it is to determine what Shakespeare believed from his plays.

In his commendable advice that we should attend to the form first (it is odd to think that D. H. Lawrence would agree with him), Frye pushes his argument so far that he underlines the potential limita-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions in his criticism of Shakespeare and of all drama, if not of all literature. We can agree with him when he says that:

> In Shakespeare the meaning of the play is the play, there being nothing to be abstracted from the total experience of the play. Progress in grasping the meaning is a progress, not in seeing more in the play, but in seeing more of it.

But the use of the word "meaning" implies that some residue of significance, at least some total feel of experience—a "taste in the head," as Empson says—arises from our "seeing more." It is, moreover, one of the critic's chief functions to attempt to define and place the particular quality of this "total experience." In the next sentence following our quotation, Frye's mythical theory leads him to the curious definition of the meaning as a progress "from the individual plays to the class of things called plays, to the 'meaning' of drama as a whole." And what is that? It is what drama does "through the identity of myth and metaphor," and that in turn is "what its ritual predecessors tried to do by the identity of sympathetic magic: unite the human and the natural worlds." Abstraction, it seems, is inevitable at some point in critical discourse, as it is in all discourse.

If we overlook the circular character of an argument that begins by establishing the ritual cycle in drama through analogies between plays and actual ritual and that ends by concluding that the meaning of the plays is to be found in this generalized ritual cycle, we nevertheless can see the death's-head of all myth criticism peering through these statements. The critic and his readers must finally conclude that all plays are one universal Play, that there are no individual meanings, but only the Meaning. We need not deny that the ritual analogies are "there," or that they tell us something (probably) about the genesis of comedy. But having found the pattern, what more is there to say? The original discovery of analogies with ritual, made by Jane Harrison, Murray and others, some fifty years ago, was an exciting event, and every reader of Greek drama must remember his own initial thrill in learning of their discovery. For the past twenty-five years we have seen some interesting applications of the formula to the plays of later writers, especially Shakespeare. But once the critic has pointed out the analogy, he may feel a little like Frost's Witch of Coös—"When I have done it, what have I done?"

This is hardly to suggest that Frye's treatment of individual plays in the later and more "mythical" half of his book is without value. We learn interesting things, not about myth in general, but about particular parallels or overtones, such as the hints in *The Tempest* of analogies to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the ordeal of Aeneas or the presence of the myth of metamorphosis in a *Comedy of Errors*. There are also some fine pages on the way a character quite incidental to the main action, like the clown Lavache in *All's Well*, may express in a joking aside the essential comic vision of mingled sympathy and ridicule.

But in much of Frye's application of the cyclical theory, we find a mechanical routine leading to conclusions that are sometimes true, and sometimes forced. It is thus we learn that in *The Winter's Tale* "eventually the sacrificial role settles on Mamillius," or that in *All's Well* "the natural society" equivalent to that of *The Tempest* and *Cymbeline* "is contained in Helena's magical power of healing the diseased king." As we go through more examples of mythical forms in each play, the sense of monotony and critical busy-work increases. The method so pursued leads to disposing with literature, rather than exploring it, and raises questions about myth criticism and its future that take us far beyond the limits of Frye's book, and this review.

Reuben A. Brower

LOOKING FOR THE MAN

GOING TO MEET THE MAN. By James Baldwin. Dial. $4.95.

It hardly seems surprising now that when *The Fire Next Time* was first published in the *New Yorker* it was titled "Letter From A Region In My Mind": the power of James Baldwin's earlier essays was largely derived from his ability to isolate and probe the inflamed regions of his consciousness. The title was of interest for other reasons, though, since it attested to a shift in emphasis which had been growing gradually more perceptible in the later essays and fiction. Mr. Baldwin, it appeared, had begun to realize how highly personal his writing was; he had become self-conscious.

Apparently faced with two alternatives—to become a Negro representative or to run the risk of self-exposure to the point at which he might be considered a special case (and thus perhaps diminish his political impact)—he chose the first. It was not an easy choice to make, especially for someone so convinced that to be free the Negro had to be seen as an individual and not simply a living reminder of white guilt and frustration. Besides, Mr. Baldwin is not now and never was an ideologist: he is a writer, understandably preoccupied with privacy, and his choice has had effects not wholly suited to his temperament. As one of his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

characters observes, "I've got no vision of emancipating anybody. I want to emancipate myself."

In what might be regarded as an attempt to preserve his own sense of himself, a sense which he had struggled so long to achieve, he began to withdraw from his own writing: as it became more public, less of him seemed to be in it. As his notoriety increased, his personality was oversimplified, appropriated, and consumed. By obviously gauging (but often misjudging) his effects, Mr. Baldwin created a situation in which the eye of the audience was fixed on the author as a performer, and the urgency of the race problem in America became a backdrop for elaborate rhetorical assaults which could be dutifully acknowledged but forgotten with a sigh. Perceived as a performance, his writing was relatively painless, and the necessity behind it seemed less threatening when it could be confused with the audience's own imaginative needs.

While in his essays Mr. Baldwin might continue to narrow and fragment himself in order to conform to his particular rhetorical intentions, successful fiction demands a certain imaginative wholeness which he has rarely been able to achieve. For all its faults and crudities, *Go Tell It On The Mountain* still stands as his most successful work in fiction. A sustained effort to wrest words from live experience, it was liable to the excesses which such barehanded grappling must involve. But what authority the novel has exists apart from its technique: it is to be found in the underlying force of the author's relentless exploration and discovery of his own feelings.

The stories in this new collection add nothing to Mr. Baldwin's stature, nor do they diminish it by much. Five have appeared in print before; the other three are new and, for the most part, disappointing. Taken as a whole, the book traces the author's progress from "The Rockpile" and "The Outing," halting first steps toward the first novel, to his most recent work, which suffers from its journalistic conception. With the possible exception of the first two, all the stories tend to tear themselves apart. At best, they are composed in a prose oddly balanced between sheer banality and rhetoric as thick as jam. (It is no accident that both extremes are basically evasive, generalized ways of packaging experience which do not require careful thought or close fidelity to the particulars at hand.) The balance is so precarious, the pull in either direction so great, that one false step is fatal.

The author, unhappily, makes more than one. While his writing labors under a burden of irrelevant subtlety, his perceptions lack bite. Too often in these stories Mr. Baldwin is held spellbound by his sensitivity; it is like a wall between him and his characters. If he fails to make the verbal incisions necessary to expose his subjects, it is often because he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

takes for granted precisely those things which should be in question, e.g., the dimensions of his characters, the implications of their actions. In "This Morning, This Evening, So Soon," for instance, his sentimentality about the European "sense of tragedy" is personified in Vidal, a French film director: unexamined, his behavior is almost indistinguishable from the civility of moral exhaustion.

Most of the stories are too long and at the same time too schematic. Given the author's procedure, this effect seems inescapable: Mr. Baldwin frequently restricts himself to a preconceived scenario which he tediously fills out, discovering nothing unexpected in the process. The characters, much of the time, are only there to prove a point. The title story, for example, deals with a red-necked southern sheriff's deputy who cannot perform in bed with his wife until he slips into reverie about lynchings and whupping blacks. In the hands of a comedian like Lenny Bruce, this kind of sick joke might be reduced to one line—"Quick, Margaret, my cattle prod!"

The stories which ring truest are "Come Out The Wilderness" and "Sonny's Blues." In the first, a Negro secretary is about to be discarded by her white lover (a painter she has evidently been supporting) and she cannot bring herself to recognize the break; the second is concerned with a Negro schoolteacher whose need for absolute security will not allow him to face his troubled younger brother like a man. Both stories deal with people forced to look at what they do not want to see; in both the dialogue is clean and accurate, conveying a wide range of instinctive and studied feelings. Here the author permits himself that freedom of response too often lacking in his work; in searching out his characters, he shares in their equivocations of identity, ambivalence, and fear, convincing the reader at last that he is saved, when he is saved, from his own rhetoric by an unkillable awareness of the cost of vision.

Stephen Donadio

TIBOR de NAGY GALLERY

Fairfield Porter
Feb 15 - Mar 5

Robert Goodnough
Mar 8 - Mar 26

NEW ADDRESS:
29 West 57 St., New York City

PARTISAN REVIEW—Vols. 1-31
1934-1964

Entirely in the original edition, complete and in good condition.
$400.00

(For additional charge, these volumes can be library bound.)

Write: Partisan Review
Box 166, Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ROMANTIC AGONY

WORDSWORTH'S POETRY 1787-1814. By Geoffrey H. Hartman. Yale University Press. $8.50.

It was A. C. Bradley who—in reaction to Arnold and the whole nineteenth-century tradition—first called attention from Wordsworth's lyrics and "nature poetry" to what he called the "visionary" and "apocalyptic" passages of *The Prelude*. He discovered a movement in Wordsworth not only beyond nature but *against* it. We can look at Geoffrey Hartman's challenging book as an extension of Bradley's insight into a full-scale reading of Wordsworth's career. He aims to write the history of a "supervening consciousness, which Wordsworth names Imagination in *Prelude VI*" and which Hartman defines as "*consciousness of self raised to apocalyptic pitch.*" But the critical consensus since Bradley has changed drastically. Wordsworth is no longer merely Nature's Boswell, and nothing has received more ample justice in recent years than the "visionary" side of the Romantic poets. Under the influence of Northrop Frye's critical theory and his study of Blake some critics have even identified the essence of romanticism with myth-making, the creation of wholly self-subsistent worlds beyond nature and obedient only to the laws of the poetic imagination.

Hartman shares much with these critics. He shares their interest in the later work of Blake, for both its mythic autonomy and its apocalyptic energy. By temperament he is disposed usually to begin his exegesis with a quest for genre if not for archetype. And he describes English romanticism as "a renascence of the Renaissance: a return to the spirit of Spenser and Milton, to their redemption of imaginative thought wherever it is found."

Yet much as Hartman admires Milton's "analogical and myth-making imagination" and Spenser's "unashamed direct exercise of the poetical faculty," he is fully aware of the ambivalence of the Romantics toward their great forebears, which—especially in Keats and Wordsworth—is really an ambivalence toward the visionary mode itself. In practice they admired and did otherwise. One of the emblems of this book is the "mutilated bower" of "Nutting," a poem in which Wordsworth describes a *rite de passage* through the bower of Spenserian and pastoral Romance, toward "a sense of pain" that is associated with selfhood and consciousness, a transformation even more explicit in the poems of Keats. Each time Hartman evokes Milton and Spenser as models, he immediately rebounds to make the crucial distinctions. After

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

likening Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence" to Spenser's *Prothalamion* he goes on to write:

> Spenser's refrain . . . "Sweet Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song," is the very emblem of literary and natural continuity, and indicates by its steady return how much time is at man's disposal, how everything will flow along in order and degree, and how the world is too well established on the flood for any "end" to be feared. But Wordsworth's greatest lyrics are acts of a living mind open to the terror of discontinuity. His encounter with the Leech-gatherer is unrelieved by myth or allegory or any steadying indulgence.

Here Hartman renders the full force of the poet's attempt to confront his condition nakedly, without the mediation or consolation of myth. He frees himself decisively from the limitations of the archetypal critics; from their erudite stress (in Frye's case) on convention over invention; from their refusal to deal with what Frank Kermode calls "the personal presence of a work of art, its existential complexities, all that makes it mean something *now*."

Hartman's book is a deceptive one. Nothing would seem to mean less *now* than a study of the interplay of Imagination and Nature in Wordsworth. Nature is a dead word to the modern sensibility, and such "reciprocity" has long been a cliché of academic criticism. But Hartman makes us feel for the first time the *contingency* of Wordsworthian reciprocity. His theme is not the dubious myth of the marriage of mind and nature ("fitting & fitted") that so enraged Blake. Instead Hartman records the "acts of a living mind open to the terror of discontinuity," and argues that this sense of terror, which he finds to be primal to Wordsworth's mind, engenders a dialectic; it makes some theory of continuity necessary. Hartman's real project is to give a more complex account of the English Romantics by calling upon terms and strategies more highly developed in German romanticism and philosophy. The antithetical model for his view of Wordsworth's development is a paradigm made explicit in Germany, according to which alienation from nature is the first condition of the emergence into consciousness: selfhood implies separation. He argues that the early Wordsworth himself glimpsed this prospect and saw something even more terrifying—that the imagination, *his* imagination, not only threatened to sunder him from nature but was an apocalyptic force that sought no less than the overthrow of nature. What Wordsworth then confusingly goes on calling "Nature" develops as a response to the threat of alienation. In "The Ruined Cottage," he says, "at last, consciousness is not a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simple violation of nature. Though the poet realizes as strongly as before that the imagination must separate from nature, he now sees the separation as part of a process providentially encouraged by nature itself."

One real test of any such interpretation is the *Lyrical Ballads* which, unlike *The Prelude* (with its many dense and abstract passages), stubbornly resists assimilation into any synoptic account of Wordsworthian "doctrine." But at this point Hartman, far from forcing his theme as he does on the very early poems, enlarges and deepens it. Brilliantly pursuing the motif of separation, he shows how many of the frightful obsessions of the characters consist in a tenacious clinging, a refusal of separation, whose meaning is a refuge from selfhood and individuation. He treats Lucy as "a boundary being" who on the threshold of humanization instead dies into nature. But the emphasis, as he shows, is not on her death but on the consciousness of the survivor. "If Lucy avoids the crisis of separation, the poet does not. She dies on the threshold of humanization, but he survives with 'The memory of what has been,/ And never more will be.'"

This is critical intelligence that stands easily with the finest Wordsworth has received, and it is followed by an even more remarkable chapter called "Toward *The Prelude,*" the best in the book. Here Hartman, allowing himself an unusual degree of generalization, analyzes recently published fragments of blank verse, little epiphanies in which we see Wordsworth experimenting on both language and experience precisely in the direction of those visionary moments of *The Prelude.* Epiphany is the crucial word, though Wordsworth does not use it, and it embodies my objection to what will be the most controversial gesture of the book, Hartman's use of the term apocalypse. He takes off from an interpretation offered by Wordsworth himself in Book VI of *The Prelude* of the experience of crossing the Alps, in which he describes the landscape of the Simplon Pass as "Characters of the great Apocalypse,/ The types and symbols of Eternity." This passage, with its apostrophe to Imagination, is central to Hartman's thinking, and his account of it is the most subtle and thorough ever given. But in treating this episode and the ascent of Snowdon in Book XIV as the two rival highpoints of *The Prelude,* Hartman ignores his wise observation that "Wordsworth generally avoids making his epiphanies into epocha: into decisive turns of personal fate or history."

If Hartman were merely to use "apocalyptic" as he often does, to describe any impulse that questions or asserts its autonomy from nature, we might quarrel with the word but not with the argument. But when he associates Wordworth with—to cite one of his own prefatory defini-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions of the term—"the kind of imagination that is concerned with the supernatural and especially the Last Things," our sense of the poet rebels. The exuberant, utopian verses of the unfinished "Recluse" are perhaps an exception, but that is the only poem of Wordsworth in which, as Hartman admits, "the relations between self and nature [are] relatively unproblematic." Even the afflatus of Book VI is but a momentary "flash that has revealed/The invisible world," that is, an epiphany rather than apocalypse. ("Flash" significantly reappears in the Snowdon account, which is even more clearly a momentary vision.) The Simplon Pass itself, with its "immeasurable height/ Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,/ The stationary blasts of waterfalls," in which nature is at once and unceasingly being destroyed and being preserved, implies (to use a political analogy) permanent revolution rather than the *telos* or end of history—not the Last Things but, as Wordsworth himself concludes, an order "of first, and last, and midst, and without end."

Morris Dickstein

The Poetic Themes of Robert Lowell
by Jerome Mazzaro

Jerome Mazzaro traces the development of Lowell's style, explores literary and philosophical influences underlying the poems, and examines the major poems line-for-line to illuminate Lowell's complex views of the writer and of man's nature. Setting the work in its proper historical, cultural, and religious contexts, Mazzaro provides a basis for understanding Lowell's art.
156 pages $4.50

The Philosophy of Surrealism
by Ferdinand Alquié

"Alquié's study is unique, and stands as an important contribution to the critical literature on surrealism ... essential reading for anyone interested in surrealism, whether as literature, art, or attitude toward life."
—J. H. Matthews

In this landmark study Ferdinand Alquié explores the origins of the surrealist philosophy—of love, of life, of man's relations to the world—which has left its imprint on the art and thought of our time.
He discusses surrealist aims and hopes, examines the relationship between the surrealist revolt and the Marxist revolution, and defines surrealist conceptions of poetry, love, engagement, expectations, and symbols. Finally, he relates the surrealist theory of imagination to religion, aesthetics, and metaphysics.
208 pages $5.95

The University of Michigan Press
Ann Arbor

words

If words interest you,
first buy a good dictionary.
Then buy a good *Roget*.
We don't publish dictionaries.
We publish the BEST *Roget*.
1405 pages

THE ORIGINAL
Roget's
THESAURUS
OF ENGLISH WORDS
AND PHRASES
Americanized for the first time.
Plain $6.95 • Thumb Indexed $7.95
ST. MARTIN'S • New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PERE JARRY

Selected Works of Alfred Jarry. Edited by Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor. Grove Press. $7.95.

Though it's kept the story quiet, history has treated Alfred Jarry rather well. To be sure, in France he remains something of a cult; in England and America, he has been neglected. This is unfortunate in both cases, but it has a certain justice, too. However much it deserves to be appreciated in its own right, Jarry's provocative style has survived mainly through its impact on others. Many modern movements have been nourished on his bravura subversion of the nineteenth-century esthetic of pathos. His explosive relation to symbolism ("after us, the Savage God," Yeats wrote of him) in some ways allowed the movement to go beyond Mallarmé. And the *épatisme* associated with his life and his work (he made little distinction between them) is closely connected with this success.

Jarry was most famous during his lifetime as a topic of conversation, that is, as the madman responsible for the seldom produced, endlessly discussed farce, *Ubu-Roi. Ubu's* electrifying *succès de scandale* in 1896 (it opened with the neologism *merdre* and closed after one wild performance before an audience that included Mallarmé, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin and Yeats) led to a frenzy among the critics that suggests some rougher jolt than mere obscenity of dialogue. The problem was that this carefully prepared piece of tastelessness refused to explain itself. And further, Jarry, whose personal manner was at least as strange as it seems in *The Counterfeiters,* refused to explain himself. One must have a position from which to take hold of a work of art; in this sense, criticism is justification. But despite his remarks before the performance, Jarry offered none of the usual handholds: no polish, no profundity, no suffering, no "affirmations," no social criticism—only Ubu being nothing but himself. And it drove the audience wild.

One can be serious about the playful only when justifying it, never when participating in it. The seriousness of Jarry's art lies precisely in its systematic, highly adept evasion of solemnity. He robs the great Romantic virtue, suffering, of its status: any attempt to deal with his work must confront this radical, suspect fact. This does not mean that Jarry can be judged as one judges the dissolution of value implied by the depthless, sentimental evasion of pain associated with *kitsch.* Jarry does not evade suffering. He strips suffering of its moral authority. His work begins with the insight that most personal anguish—such as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that of neurosis—is simultaneously elemental and gratuitous, both definitive and unjustifiable in impersonal terms. In his most daring strokes, Jarry juxtaposes these antitheses so that, like Milton's Sin and Death, they endlessly devour each other in a complex, abstract farce. He sets up—in solipsism, crudity, preciosity, violence, or just plain Ubu—some sophisticated alternative for the naïve selfhood of ordinary experience, where pain is born. There he discovers that anguish can be manipulated, not merely endured. It can be play.

But Jarry's play is dissipation with depth, not mere froth; it is felt with an intensity that confronts and momentarily sets one free. Rather than finding resolution conventionally—in insight, affirmation, the pathetic, the tragic—its intensity is created only to be set loose in playful release. Thus, while not all of Jarry's work is playful, its unapologetic artificiality moves it toward play through the same process by which surrealism inevitably moves toward Dada. To move meaningfully, it must show the marks of its process (though not as scars) and it derives its "seriousness" from that. But its value as art, something slightly different, lies in sheer joy.

Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor's *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry* is a long overdue collection of Jarry's best work, at last in decent translations. Although I have minor quarrels with the selection, this book is hands down the best edition of Jarry in English, particularly because it is the first edition to include (stunningly rendered by Taylor) the incomparable *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll. Ubu* aside, *Faustroll* is Jarry's single most important book. It is incredible that the English reader has had to wait for it so long.

In *Doctor Faustroll,* Jarry indulges himself, more than anywhere else, in that branch of wisdom he invented and named 'Pataphysics. "DEFINITION. 'Pataphysics is the science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments." Following this clownish nose-dive into metaphysics, Jarry puts his doctor into a boat to sail with a bewildered process-server and a chimpanzee through the surrealistically transformed streets of Paris. Impossible to summarize their adventures. As they pass floating islands and wilting lighthouses, Jarry turns out, one after another, 'Pataphysical excursi on the "serious" art of friends like Mallarmé, Gustave Kahn, Aubrey Beardsley and Gauguin; 'Pataphysically summarizes most of the eternal questions (deliciously disposing of both Eros and Death); and ends with a 'Pataphysical definition of God, sent from heaven, mathematically provable, and tight as the *cogito.* In *Doctor Faustroll,* Jarry establishes himself as one of the great

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parodists in an age of parody: *Faustroll* is a masterpiece less because of its "critical" force (it is devoid of rancor, its very claim to authority is a joke) than because of its range. It engages every faculty—intellectual, cultural, sensual—in the release of laughter. And first on the list for 'Pataphysical demolition is the transcendental subjectivism which is 'Pataphysics' own premise. The dog here catches up with his tail (another 'Pataphysical solution) and comically devours himself, thereby ontologically establishing *Doctor Faustroll* as what Jarry would call "ethernal"—timelessly ephemeral.

None of the other selections are quite so important (or so much fun) as *Faustroll.* Of all dramatic forms, farce is weakest on the page, and I doubt that the *Ubu* plays can be read successfully at all. My admiration of Cyril Connolly's translation of *Ubu Cocu* was felt mainly in a frustrated urge to *see* it. Jarry's own theater criticism is instructive here. Positing "audience engagement" as nothing less than dramatic reality itself, Jarry stands at the beginning of the most radical development in the contemporary theater. His audience experiences "the creation of one of themselves who . . . sees the being come to life in himself that was created by himself; an active pleasure, which is God's sole pleasure and which the holiday mob achieves in caricature in the carnal act." Jarry's explorations of this idea are thin. They are interesting because they are really all about Ubu.

On what grounds are we asked to "participate" in the lumberings of Père Ubu, the archetypal slob whose coarse slapstick seems so unrelated to the ideas I have just quoted? The *Ubu* plays are farce pushed to the extreme. On stage, Ubu enacts in broadest caricature love, thought, desire, introspection, ambition, fear, even moral compunction in a way so devoid of nuance or complexity that they are not meaningful human feelings at all: they are blanks. Their sole function is to provoke the private reality of feelings in the audience that are then projected onto the stage. This has nothing to do with the empathy involved in mimetic drama, and it is entirely incorrect to think of Ubu commenting (except perhaps by ricochet) on any human fact, social, psychological, moral or whatever. Rather, Ubu is only an *object,* designed to provoke and register a human reality—the audience's—which he himself does not necessarily embody. As an object, he is outside morality and does not have any meaning, except as a neutral pole in the charged field that surrounds him—a field which, as a figure in farce, he discharges in play.

Note that Jarry's "active participation" is in fact strictly limited to farce. It took Artaud and others to propose more advanced pos-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The most important names... The most significant ideas... are coming to you from the new

UNIVERSAL LIBRARY

Just Published:

Hermann Broch

THE DEATH OF VIRGIL

UL-184 $2.95

Intro. by Hannah Arendt. "Perhaps the best novel by a European since Thomas Mann's *"The Magic Mountain."* —*The New Yorker*

William Henry Chamberlin

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

"Chamberlin's monumental history ...represents a definitive work on which his successors will find it difficult to improve." —V. M. Dean

Volume I UL-188 $2.65

1917-1918: From the Overthrow of the Czar to the Assumption of Power by the Bolsheviks.

Volume II UL-189 $2.65

1918-1921: From the Civil War to the Consolidation of Power.

Georg Lúkacs

ESSAYS ON THOMAS MANN*

UL-186 $1.95 Hardcover $3.95

"Georg Lúkacs...one of the sovereign critics of our time."
—Robert L. Stilwell, *Saturday Review*

CHRONICLES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*

UL-181 $2.95

The first new edition in almost one hundred years of a classic source book on life and thought during the Revolutionary period.
Originally compiled by Hezekiah Niles. Edited by Alden T. Vaughan. Intro. by Henry Steele Commager. Illustrated Gift Edition $6.95

Herman Finer

MUSSOLINI'S ITALY

UL-183 $2.95

A classic study of the non-Communist, one-party state.

Frank Jellinek

THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871

UL-185 $2.45

"...no doubt the best study of the Paris Commune that we have in English."
—*American Political Science Review*

Recently published:

George L. Mosse

THE CRISIS OF GERMAN IDEOLOGY: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*

UL-173 $2.65 Hardcover $5.95

"...a milestone in the study of National Socialism."
—Walter Laqueur, *N.Y. Review of Books*

John Barth

THE SOT-WEED FACTOR

UL-153 $2.95

"I was reduced to helpless laughter by at least half a dozen episodes, all improper." —Stanley Edgar Hyman

THE GREAT PURGE TRIAL*

UL-180 $2.95 Hardcover $5.95

The transcript of the most famous Moscow Purge Trial—the Bukharin Trial of 1938. Edited by Robert C. Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen. Intro. by Robert C. Tucker.

Hermann Broch

THE SLEEPWALKERS: A TRILOGY

UL-175 $2.95

Intro. by Hannah Arendt. "Broch is the greatest novelist European literature has produced since Joyce."
—George Steiner

Harold Nicolson

PEACEMAKING 1919

UL-178 $1.95

Reminiscences of the Paris Peace Conference. "...a brilliant and an important book."
—*Political Science Quarterly*

Albert Mathiez

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

UL-169 $2.65

"...a great work of literature and a great work of scholarship."
—Irving Howe

*denotes Original Universal Library Edition

GROSSET & DUNLAP'S UNIVERSAL LIBRARY

51 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sibilities. But whatever its limitations, there is something grand in this violent frivolity, this idea of art based not on empathy but action, transforming crudity into a medium for a rediscovery of the self. For Ubu's transformation is really our own, enacted upon him, briefly. The experience is short, ecstatic, complete, timelessly ephemeral—"ethernal." (This, by the way, is what Jarry means when he mentions the parody of art in the carnal act—that other model of the timelessly ephemeral. The play itself resembles a passive erotic object.)

All this is *dramatic,* in the most absolute sense. The notion of art as mere object, and the viewer's response as pure (and rather wild) action reverses the idea of action contemplated, essential, for example, to fiction. In *Ubu Roi,* the strident physicality of production —abandon, blatancy, roughhousing—means that one doesn't think; the spectator becomes—if he does not walk out—wholly engaged. On the other hand, in *Doctor Faustroll* and Jarry's other "novels," the sense of expansiveness and liberation is not sought through the free play of response but, paradoxically, through rigorous manipulation. Here the joys of 'Pataphysics, like those of any science, proceed from discipline. We are directed step by step through absurd logical arguments, seduced into solemn appraisals of the ridiculous, captivated by exquisite prose which is promptly deflated by some 'Pataphysical rabbit punch. But perhaps because Jarry was far more sensitive than his contemporaries to the gulf separating prose from theater, some of his writing is astoundingly successful in introducing into fiction the effect of certain dramatic experiences. For Jarry's genius for spectacle was painfully limited by his concept of theater as farce. Shattuck has printed some—why not all?—passages from *Nights and Days* and a few chapters from Jarry's encrusted, rather conventional and largely unsuccessful *roman précieux, Messaline,* in which events take on a dramatic vibrancy without, so far as I know, any exact precedent in fiction. Messaline's suicide, an otherwise standard love-death demise, is surrounded by an aura of sensuality comparable to the similar transposition of event, through music, in an operatic aria. And with the performance of the acrobat, Mnester, Jarry frees himself from farce and puts into fiction what he could not achieve on the stage. This passage, one of his most brilliant, is virtually a prophetic rendering of Artaud's Theater of Cruelty.

But whatever his method, Jarry's intention is constant: the transformation of event, fact, object, reality, in order to produce an experience not otherwise possible. It's hard to play with suffering—it hurts. Event, even the death of a nymphomaniac empress, is rarely surrounded with an aura. But as Jarry moves beyond fact and its pain, it is reality, rather

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than seriousness that is cheated. It can be argued that Jarry's art is reductive, and perhaps because of this he is finally a limited writer. But though it often deserves it, reality is not often cheated, at least not so the liberation is a positive good: esthetic pleasure, or (more important in Jarry's hands) release, emerging as meaningful release.

Stephen Koch

IT'S NO ACCIDENT

THE ACCIDENTAL CENTURY. By Michael Harrington. Macmillan. $5.95.

Michael Harrington argues in this interesting work that the unparalleled competence of modern technology was all an accident. Accidental too was the transformation of human existence that accompanied the changes in the way men did their work and equally accidental, he implies, was the decay of man's awareness of himself. Harrington supports his thesis, which some may want to question, by calling on the testimony of novelists, philosophers, sociologists, poets, and some economists as well. He finds the tragic mood of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* mirrored in the cleavage between community and society that Ferdinand Tönnies had detected, while the poverty of spirit that Nietzsche saw at the center of technology had been somewhat earlier reflected in the alienation of the youthful Marx. The disbelief of a Camus and a Wright Mills, urges Harrington, is not unrelated to the antipathies expressed by an Ortega y Gasset to the Western world's mass man.

All these great thinkers saw what was happening and in character it was radical. Existence was divided into categories and functions that could be evaluated, measured, quantified. The fundamental aboriginal drives that once tied man to nature were severed as he sought to attain new heights by developing his reason to the exclusion of everything else that was human. Men wanted to seize reality by pure intellect alone, a self-assigned task that was bound to fail. And fail it did, as revealed through the insights and sensibilities of Dostoevsky, Eliot, Yeats, Joyce, Veblen, Malraux, Mannheim, writers to whom Harrington appeals with marked effectiveness. But if the evidence is so overwhelming, as Harrington demonstrates, was man's metamorphosis then really so accidental?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is there not an imperative in the society that modern technology has shaped which manifests a force quite its own, a drive so powerful that it now can be deflected or controlled only with difficulty? Consider the frenetic explosion of industrialism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England. Of course, there was technology in Europe prior to that cataclysm; but it was concerned mainly with war, entertainment and miracles. The new technology began in England because that country was a frontier land separated from the continent by a thin band of water. And it began in the section of England that was itself a frontier, the raw North Country, which was populated by rough men who in the course of fabricating cottons were determined to create a history of their own. The expectation of change was strong enough to establish a kind of self-fulfilling thrust, presaging the manner in which similar prophecies are fulfilled in modern technology.

There was no smoothness, no linearity in these alterations: it may be that technology's uneven development has led Harrington to view it all as happenstance. Technology drastically modified both man's environment and men's thinking; cities were built and then made places of stench and disease; the hinterlands decayed as the machine relegated traditional crafts to the social and economic junk heap; natural materials were subjected to a relentless belt system; and man became a technicist cajoling the machine to pour forth greater and greater quantities of goods. Strategic inventions were *consciously* fitted into the factory which itself needed only to convert discrete production into continuous technique to meet the requirements of the modern age. The strength and direction of this new phenomenon was hardly accidental. One could trace its roots to an urge to control nature and its materials: the attempt succeeded because man was willing to pay the price by sacrificing his own sense of humanity.

And, as Harrington knows, there has been no stopping these forces. Technology by itself is artifact, but of the kind that has profoundly formed man's aspirations. Today these aspirations have created a situation in which the capacity of the few to control the many has been enormously enhanced in a kind of dialectical fashion. Most men are now subjected to meaningless, functionless work, compelled to accept whatever it is that technology offers. The consequence is precisely the predicament that Harrington describes, for we are only now beginning to be aware what those who push the buttons have in store for us. Yet we are unable to respond because the *raison d'être* of the machine demands that we think solely of the efficiency of it all. Having permitted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arithmetic to replace conscience, the victor must be he who seizes the ethic of efficiency.

For example, there is now abroad in the land a new breed of utopians. Scientists, engineers, systems men, computer experts and corporate oligarchs, they have the "capability" to design ways of achieving their purposes—control of others—that go beyond the present. In contrast to the gentle dreamers of the past, they are on the verge of making their fantasies come true. Efficiency requires that they ignore human consequences, for all they seek is reliability: but humans, unfortunately, are notoriously unreliable. Perhaps that is man's salvation: his essential complexity may yet confound the worshippers of efficiency. Even Stalin's Russia could not create a new Soviet type and in Orwell's *1984* there is always the lingering suspicion that O'Brien's torture rack did not fully cleanse Winston Smith's soul.

Undoubtedly it is man's resiliency that bolsters Harrington's optimism. He argues that despite bureaucratic structures, the repression of instinctual drives and the failure thus far to control his destiny, man may yet form a new society. The Harrington approach, of course, is socialist but pragmatic: the collective ownership of technology and its products based on a commitment to free choice for the individual, he urges, ought to be the basic rule for any decent modern society. This requires the sort of planning, he says, that would transform power, making it a vehicle for those values that might guide the use of technology in responsible ways.

Harrington's scheme is not unreasonable, for given the agonies of technological change, there can be little cause for universal celebration. As he says, Western man has revolutionized everything about him, except himself. That is why Harrington is able to relate—and I think rather well—the views of Thomas Mann, Dostoevsky, Proust and others to the technological and economic dilemmas of the day. These writers knew better than sociologists and economists that the impersonal drives of man's technique—impersonal but not accidental—could offer only a self-satisfied emptiness. These parts of the book, which reveal an uncommon awareness of the totality of our culture, should impell us to return to the classics, for they would demonstrate that when ideology ends, utopia ends and writes *finis* to the prospect for achieving genuine humanity. The writers Harrington cites describe for him, as they do for many of us, the disintegration of a society enamoured of technique, a disintegration symbolized in Goya's drawings of war.

Is Harrington inventing problems just to talk about them? I believe not. They are there, real, enormous, dominating our thought, which ought

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to respond as never before to the failure of responsibility. Harrington's criticism is not so irrelevant as some of his contemporaries might think. Has social development, he asks, departed so markedly from the patterns outlined by the authors from whom he draws sustenance that their analyses no longer apply? Harrington doubts it, and I agree. His book forcefully demonstrates that the radical posture may still be valid.

Ben B. Seligman

THE AMERICAN PLACE THEATRE

IN ST. CLEMENTS' CHURCH

1965-66 SEASON

We're pleased to announce that we will accept subscriptions for the balance of this season; you will see:

(1) *Hogan's Goat* by William Alfred. At the East 74th St. Theater.

(2) Three additional full productions. At the American Place Theatre. Starting February 5 with *Jonah* by Paul Goodman.

(3) In Progress Work.

Subscription price: $15.00 per person

Mail to: American Place Theatre, 423 West 46 St., New York 10036

All Subscriptions Tax Deductible

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARGUMENTS

SITUATING SARTRE

Lionel Abel

Situations,[1] the most recent collection of essays by Jean-Paul Sartre, shows the writer's great virtuosity, but not, I think, his best thought. Certainly the essay on Tintoretto is a remarkable piece. The Venice of Tintoretto's time is brought to life; also the painter's rivalry with Titian; or rather, since Titian was already canonized when Tintoretto started his career, I should say the essay brings to life Tintoretto's rivalry with his predecessor's reputation—a dead thing, in a way, for a reputation is a monument rather than a man. And how Tintoretto struggled against the weight of Titian's fame, the manner in which this dead thing made Tintoretto energetic and alive, is told with wonderful verve and psychological finesse. Then the book contains Sartre's tribute to Gide on the occasion of the latter's death, a brilliant and beautiful piece of writing. There is also Sartre's reply to Albert Camus on the occasion of their break. But the volume does not contain Camus' original letter to *Les Temps Modernes,* which Sartre's essay is an answer to. So American readers unfamiliar with what led to Sartre's quarrel with Camus may not grasp what Sartre is driving at in his piece or be able to judge his judgment. Also there are essays on Paul Nizan, Giacometti, Nathalie Sarraute, René Liebowitz, Merleau-Ponty, and André Gerz; these, while often brilliant, and written with Sartre's customary force, are not quite so searching as earlier essays by him. (Though I think the essay on René Leibowitz a better piece of Marxist analysis than anything written by anyone during the thirties. When I first read it some years back, I could not help thinking how Trotsky would have admired it.) In any case, even when not at his best, Sartre is more interesting than any other living writer.

1 SITUATIONS. By Jean-Paul Sartre. Braziller. $5.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But is the direction of his thought generally understood? That Sartre's writing and thinking are widely misconceived is evident to me from the review of *Situations* which appeared in the June 3, 1965, *New York Review of Books*. The review was by the learned and interesting British philosopher, Stuart Hampshire, who cannot be accused of narrowness, prejudice or cultural provincialism. For Mr. Hampshire is as urbane as any Frenchman could wish. He is at home in the humanities as in the sciences. And he knows at first hand philosophical trends which have occupied the minds of continental Europeans in recent years. Yet I think he fails to appreciate the philosophical thinking which Sartre represents.

Is this kind of thinking to be dismissed as wrongheaded, decried as absurd, seriously criticized, or upheld in argument? In any case, it should be properly described. And this, I think, Mr. Hampshire signally failed to do in his piece.

To start with, Mr. Hampshire thinks it paradoxical that radical thinking in France has been little influenced by Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* and the *German Ideology* (written by Marx in collaboration with Engels). It is fashionable nowadays to discover paradoxes. I, for one, see no paradox here. The *Theses on Feuerbach* is limited to twenty-eight sentences and covers three printed pages. The *Theses* are very suggestive, but then they amount to little more than suggestions. Marx, I believe, left these theses in such an unfinished state simply because he was so unsure of them. We must, of course, distinguish Marx very sharply from Engels, who was ready to give himself enthusiastically to notions Marx must have considered hasty and unjustified surmises. Such surmises abound in the *German Ideology*, along with much trenchant social criticism. Of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, the Italian socialist Andrea Caffi has written (*Instead*, 1948):

> In these brief notes there is the outline of a valiant effort to bring into the circle of positive science the relations between beings of flesh and blood and the entangled reality of social life. Some have found a satisfactory precision in these formulas. But it seems to me that Marx himself knew he was on the threshold of insurmountable difficulties and he voluntarily renounced this line of thinking, a line he might have found acceptable at the time of the *German Ideology*.

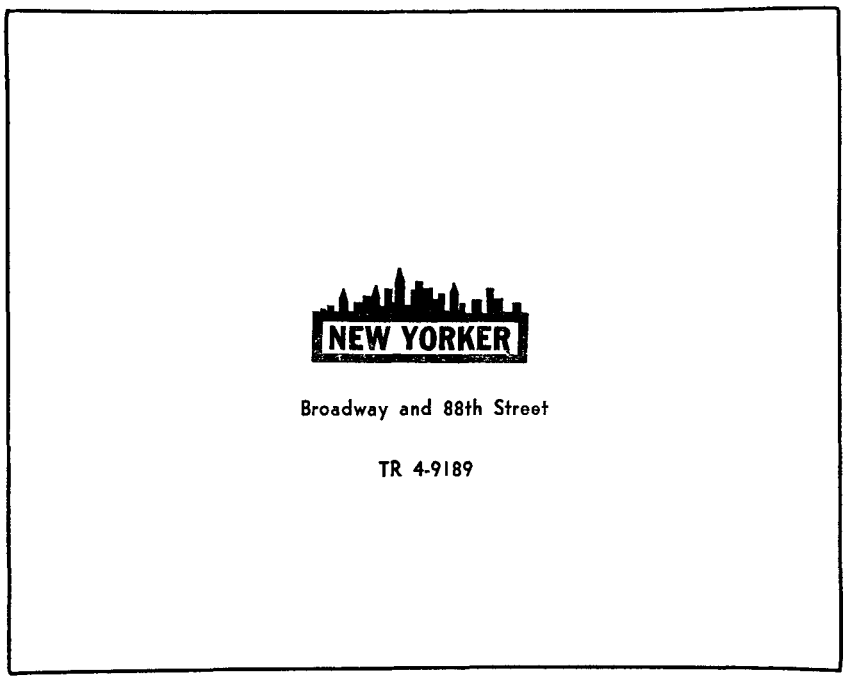
I concur with this judgment. And I do not think Mr. Hampshire will challenge it. But then why does he criticize French radical thought for not having been influenced by the *Theses on Feuerbach*, which Marx himself refused to be influenced by, and by the *German Ideology*, written

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

earlier than the *Theses* at a time when Marx was less critical-minded and more susceptible to what Andrea Caffi has called "the ingenious combinations that seemed useful to Engels"?

Why did Mr. Hampshire bring up this matter of the *Theses on Feuerbach* and the *German Ideology* in his criticism of contemporary French thought, specifically Sartre's? I think Mr. Hampshire's point is expressed more clearly later in his review when he objects to Sartre's philosophical enterprise as such: Sartre's reflection on human existence and its structures independently of the so-called human sciences: history, psychology, sociology. Now Sartre is not ignorant in these fields; nor does Mr. Hampshire suggest that he is. What troubles Mr. Hampshire is that Sartre does not feel obliged to accept the conclusions of the collective effort made in these fields and is ready to review these efforts on his own in terms of the one discipline he does submit to. What is that discipline? Philosophy.

It comes down to this. What Mr. Hampshire has against Sartre is that he is trying to philosophize. This may seem a curious objection coming from a man who is himself a philosopher. But Mr. Hampshire's philosophy consists in refusing to philosophize. Apparently philosophiz-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing is what the philosopher today must not do. In philosophizing the thinker depends on his own thought. Should one not make use of what others are thinking? Perhaps Mr. Hampshire values the Marx of the *German Ideology* because Marx wrote it with a collaborator; one, to be sure, who was less critical-minded than he.

But was it unwise of Descartes to sit alone by his stove and meditate? In so doing he opened the way for the mathematical physics which has altered the lives of all of us. Mathematical physics is a success. And so Descartes' lonely thinking, according to Mr. Hampshire, was justified. But why, Mr. Hampshire wants to know, should a man in the twentieth century repeat the intellectual adventure of Descartes and hope in the isolation of his study to get significant results without more than casual consultation of the careful efforts made by collective workers in the various scientific fields? How can a man living in this century be as interested in his own ideas as Sartre seems to be? Mr. Hampshire compares Sartre to a hand-loom weaver "resisting the intensive division of intellectual labor which the secure advance of knowledge now requires."

I would suggest to Mr. Hampshire that he think carefully about the sentence from Andrea Caffi which I quoted, which to me is as interesting as any of Marx's theses on Feuerbach. The sentence refers to the "insurmountable difficulties" Marx faced when he tried to relate "beings of flesh and blood and the entangled reality of social life." Does Mr. Hampshire believe that those difficulties can be surmounted more easily by the efforts of any number of experts in various fields and cannot be surmounted by the thought of a single individual? I see no reason why this should be true. Nor do I think Mr. Hampshire can give me one.

What is really difficult intellectually, in my guess, can only be resolved by an individual effort. Experts are only capable of what is easy—for experts.

What has been Sartre's intellectual adventure during these last twenty years? What was Sartre trying to find out about reality that made him not rely on scientific findings or received opinions? What was the object of his thought?

Sartre is not a metaphysician, and his object was not metaphysics, as that term is generally understood. Nor has he been trying to solve problems which it is up to the scientists to solve. He has not addressed himself to the illogicalities of logic or the uncertainties in mathematical thought. Sartre, I think, addressed himself from the start to those mysteries about the relation of one man to another which Marx in his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Theses on Feuerbach found "insurmountable." Following Husserl and Heidegger, Sartre devoted his effort to substituting anthropology for physics as the privileged science and to replacing meta-physics with meta-anthropology, that is to say, with an anthropology that is truly philosophical.

For example, there is the question of our knowledge of other minds. How, I wonder, can this question be dealt with by utilizing "the intensive division of intellectual labor which the secure advance of knowledge now requires"? There is the question of whether we are free or determined, responsible for our actions or not responsible for them. There is the question of our relation to others, whatever our knowledge of them may be. All such questions, according to Sartre, have to be dealt with in terms of "lived experience." And Sartre, following Husserl, also Heidegger, but Husserl mainly, has taken the view that what is understandable in terms of "lived experience" is truer that any deliverance of the exact sciences. Moreover—though this is Husserl, perhaps, more than Sartre—"lived experience" often has to be protected from the deliverances of the exact sciences, which can be no truer than it is.

Husserl was even prepared to assert that the Copernican theory was a distortion of experience, for in "lived experience" we are at rest on the earth and do not circle the sun at a speed inexperienceable by us. Perhaps Husserl went too far in this assertion. After all, when we think of the earth we are thinking astronomically and not in terms of "lived experience." And if we think in astronomical terms, we should not deny the precision these terms make possible. Yet Husserl is right in a way, too, for in "lived experience" we do feel ourselves to be at rest on whatever point of the earth we are. And this truth is quite as true as the Copernican theory, though I concede its truth does not have to be protected from that theory.

Husserl's great insight, which Sartre has made his own, more or less, is that we are in possession of far more important truths than we ourselves may realize. This was Plato's insight, also Proust's. And it has one great advantage: it helps one from being intimidated by the scientists. And why should they intimidate us? Their knowledge rests on ours.

Such knowledge of reality as we have or can have, without scientific information, comes from "lived experience," insofar as we understand it, or try to understand it. And what can be understood from "lived experience" is more certain than any scientific theory, no matter how well founded; more certain and more astonishing, too, than our measurements of the sun, our analyses of its components, our most precise find-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ings about distant stars, our incredibly exact calculations about the tiniest particles of matter, our theories of anti-matter, our most ingenious laws and even more ingenious understanding that there are exceptions to the rule of law. All this knowledge, this scientific knowledge, rests finally on the much simpler and more easily accessible knowledge that we have of others and of ourselves. And without this primary knowledge everything else we know would have no foundation or point or purpose.

One question that has never been raised about the possible journey of men to the moon or other bodies in space is this: is "lived experience" possible on such bodies, that is, "lived experience" by someone from the earth? Perhaps this is possible. I am not so sure it is. But if it is not, then, I think, the grandiose enterprise of landing human beings on the moon, or on some planet, is quite worthless and ultimately without interest. Wordsworth in his *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* took, I think, a similar view of the relation of science to "lived experience," which he equated with poetry:

> The remotest discoveries of the chemist, the botanist, or mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when

THE SCHOOL OF LETTERS
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
1965-66

Summer, Fall, and Spring Courses
On the graduate level in the theory and practice of
Literary Criticism
Including work toward advanced degrees in
Criticism, English Literature, and Comparative Literature

1966 Summer Courses by:

GLAUCO CAMBON
WALTER J. ONG, S.J.
R. W. B. LEWIS
MAKOTO UEDA
DAVID WAGONER
FRANCIS FERGUSSON

Scholarships available to qualified students for both summer session and regular academic year

Address Inquiries to:

The School of Letters
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
208 S. Indiana Avenue
Bloomington, Indiana

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.

Has anyone asked whether our heroic cosmonauts can remain members of the household of man? No, this question is never asked, because it is not understood that our chief, our most important, our most secure knowledge, is not dependent on any science. Wordsworth, of course, was more interested in other values than the value of knowing. He did not realize perhaps that the values he was interested in are the guarantees of all our scientific knowledge. And I think it was Descartes' understanding of this that made him the great thinker he was, much more than his contribution to mathematical physics, which could have developed without his aid.

Edmund Husserl, because of the importance he gave to "lived experience," realized after the advent of Hitler that he had to concern himself with social questions, even though his training and temperament inclined him to a pure intellectualism and strictly technical problems. And so Husserl turned from the pure phenomenology which had been his enterprise for years and wrote his great book on the crisis of European humanity, his last and possibly most significant work. The analysis of "lived experience" leads, and has to lead, to consideration of social and finally political questions and to taking a stand on these. I must point out here that the analysis of problems in logic, mathematics, linguistics, does not lead, or have to lead, to any consideration of social or political questions or to any commitment to social action. Bertrand Russell was a socialist. Perhaps he still is. I am not sure. But his views in technical philosophy did not lead him to holding political views, as he himself has made quite clear. On the other hand, the analysis of "lived experience," which yields the insight that we are involved with others continually, does lead to taking a definite, even if wrong, stand on society and politics.

It was Sartre's great merit to realize that the philosophical enterprise he undertook involved a political as well as an intellectual adventure. Now I am not going to endorse his support of Communist policies in the past or in the present. Actually, Sartre is not very knowing politically. And I think some of Mr. Hampshire's strictures on him in this regard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are quite right; for instance, when Mr. Hampshire writes that Sartre "nowhere shows any interest in the stuff and business of politics," I have to agree with him. Which reminds me of a conversation I had with Sartre in 1948. He asked me, a visitor for the first time to France, why I thought Picasso had joined the Communist Party. I replied without hesitating, though I had no personal acquaintance with Picasso: "He joined the Communist Party because he's not interested in politics." Sartre responded by agreeing. "You're quite right," he said. Of course, at that time he had his own party, the R. D. R. After that was liquidated, though, he gave his support to the Communists, like Picasso I should say, because of a lack of real interest in politics.

However, as I said above, Sartre's philosophy requires him to be interested in politics, and it is Sartre's philosophy that I have tried to defend here against Stuart Hampshire, rather than the particular politics Sartre has pursued in recent years. I wish he had more of a flair for politics. That he does not have such a flair does not invalidate the direction of his thought.

Stuart Hampshire

The main point of disagreement between Mr. Abel and me is a strictly philosophical one: he believes, following Husserl, that there is a superior certainty and knowledge to be found in "lived experience," and that philosophy is properly the pursuit of these masked certainties. I believe that we neither have, nor can have, any criterion to distinguish true from false statements allegedly derived from "lived experience." He claims that the analysis of "lived experience" yields the insight that "we are involved with others continually." This conclusion, available to Aristotle and almost every philosopher that I can think of, is hardly a triumph for the phenomenological method; nor does it yield "a definite, even if wrong, stand on society and politics." It is equally compatible with communist, fascist, liberal and conservative attitudes in politics. I did not reproach Sartre with philosophizing, or imply that there is no place for philosophical inquiry; on the contrary, I would claim that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the comparison and evaluation of claims to knowledge—e.g., knowledge from "lived experience," in psychology, in the social sciences, in esthetic criticism and so on—*is* the perpetual subject of philosophical inquiry. But I did reproach Sartre with basing his political attitudes on metaphysical distinctions (and the distinction between the *en soi* and the *pour soi is* metaphysical) which are quite arbitrary, and which can be (and have been) used to support opposite political attitudes. And this was the point of my reference to Marx and early Marxism: all those years ago Marx warned socialists against ideologies that claim an authority from metaphysical abstractions, rather than from an examination of concrete conditions and forms of life and of the actual mechanisms of change in history. Of course philosophy, as the theory of knowledge, is relevant, though not decisive, when political attitudes and plans and values are in question; we cannot, for instance, rationally decide what we ought to do toward changing society unless we have some rational agreement about what we can properly claim to know of human needs and aspirations and of the possibility of satisfying them.

Noah Greenberg

1919-1966

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Great Works & Collections in Their STANDARD EDITIONS

Ascham, Roger
THE WHOLE WORKS OF ROGER ASCHAM
Now First Collected and Revised with a Life of the Author.
Edited by J. A. Giles
1864-65 • London
3 volume set (in 4 parts) Cloth **$72.50**

Foxe, John
ACTS AND MONUMENTS (FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS)
Edited by S. R. Cattley and George Townsend
1843-49 • London
8 volume set, Cloth **$197.50**

Fuller, Thomas
THE HISTORY OF THE WORTHIES OF ENGLAND
Edited by P. Austin Nuttall
1840 • London
3 volume set, Cloth **$65.00**

Gairdner, James (Edited by)
THE PASTON LETTERS (A.D. 1422-1509)
1904 • London
6 volume set, Cloth **$85.00**

Gardiner, Samuel R.
HISTORY OF ENGLAND (in three sections)
1603-1656 • London
18 volume set, Cloth **$200.00**

Holinshed, Raphael
HOLINSHED'S CHRONICLES of ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND
Edited by Henry Ellis
1807-08 • London
6 volume set, Cloth **$240.00**

Nott, George Frederick (Edited by)
THE WORKS OF HENRY HOWARD (Earl of Surrey) and of SIR THOMAS WYATT, THE ELDER
1815-16 • London
2 volume set, Cloth **$75.00**

Oldys, William and Park, Thomas (Edited by)
HARLEIAN MISCELLANY
1808-13 • London
10 volume set, Cloth **$270.00**

Scott, Walter (Edited by)
SOMERS TRACTS
1809-15 • London
13 volume set, Cloth **$310.00**

Shakespeare, William
THE PLAYS AND POEMS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
"Malone's Shakespeare." The Third Variorum.
Facsimile Edition.
Edited by James Boswell
1821 • London
21 volume set, Cloth **$275.00**

Skelton, John
THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN SKELTON
Edited by Alexander Dyce
1843 • London
2 volume set, Cloth **$55.00**

Wright, Thomas and Halliwell-Phillipps, J. O. (Edited by)
RELIQUIAE ANTIQUAE
Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts, Illustrating Chiefly Early English Literature and the English Language.
1841-43 • London
2 volume set, Cloth **$45.00**

A M S PRESS, INC. **56 East 13th St., New York, N. Y. 10003**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the current issue of

STUDIES ON THE LEFT

THE MOVEMENT AND ITS CRITICS by Ronald Aronson

REPORT FROM SYRACUSE PART II by Danny Schechter

BEYOND BRECHT, THE HAPPENINGS by Lee Baxandall

TOWARD A RATIONAL POLITICS by Herbert J. Gans, Staughton Lynd, James Weinstein

THE VIETNAM PROTEST MOVEMENT by Carl Oglesby, Ed Richer

Carl Resek on Christopher Lasch's THE NEW RADICALISM

Eugene D. Genovese on William Appleman Williams' THE GREAT EVASION

David Horowitz on Oskar Lange's POLITICAL ECONOMY

Enclosed is $5.00 for a one year bi-monthly subscription to STUDIES ON THE LEFT. Please begin my subscription with the current issue, Volume 6, Number 1.

As a special offer to PARTISAN REVIEW readers, send a complimentary copy of the last issue with articles by Conor Cruise O'Brien and Timothy Harding on Imperialism; Louis Harap, Morris Schappes, and Norm Fruchter on Arendt's Eichmann; and reviews by James Weinstein of Foner's HISTORY OF THE AFL, R. G. Davis of Blau's THE IMPOSSIBLE THEATRE, and Michael B. Folsom of Kettle's SHAKESPEARE.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... STATE ..... ZIP .....

STUDIES ON THE LEFT, 260 West Broadway, Room 202, New York 10013.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW DIRECTIONS BOOKS

Wilfred Owen / Collected Poems

The definitive edition of the great British World War I poet is now available as a paperbook. Introduction by C. Day Lewis. $1.95

Charles Reznikoff / Testimony

A "recitative" sequence of poems based on actual court cases from all parts of the United States in the period 1885-1890. "A superb portrayal of the emergence of the society that we have inherited." (W. S. Merwin) "An extraordinary document of human event." (Robert Creeley) *Clothbound,* $3.75; *Paperback,* $1.95

Thomas Merton / The Way of Chuang Tzu

The wisdom of Tao and Zen in fine new poetic interpretations of the sayings of China's most spiritual philosopher. *Illustrated,* $4.00

George Oppen / This in Which

An impressive new collection of poems by the author of *The Materials* which explore, in the words of Heidegger, "the third path, the arduous path of experience." *Clothbound,* $3.50; *Paperback,* $1.75

Gandhi / On Non-Violence

Selected texts from *Non-Violence in Peace and War,* edited by Thomas Merton, with an introduction which relates Gandhi's concept of *Ahimsa* to Hellenic tradition and Catholic doctrine on peace. *Paper,* $1.50

Herbert Read / The Green Child

Reality and fantasy, poetry and suspense are wonderfully blended in the novel which T. S. Eliot called "one of the finest examples of English prose style of our century." *Cloth,* $4.50; *Paper,* $1.50

Kenneth Patchen / The Memoirs of a Shy Pornographer

A paperback re-issue of Patchen's satiric novel. "Every page contains some new marvel." (Henry Miller) "An American humorist more daring than Perelman and as original as Thurber." (Selden Rodman) $1.65

George Whicher / The Goliard Poets

Lively translations, with the original Latin texts *en face,* of the irreverent ballads of the vagabond scholars who were the "Beat Poets" of the Middle Ages. Now available in paperback format. $2.35

NEW DIRECTIONS, 333 Sixth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10014

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

F. W. DUPEE

THE KING OF THE CATS

And Other Remarks on Writers and Writing

"Mr. Dupee's criticism is of the kind that creates an ambience. It is not the classroom, it is not the library; it is that indefinable place where life and the writer have had their meetings."—V. S. PRITCHETT

"Every page is admirably done . . . What a superb writer he is."—ELIZABETH HARDWICK, *New York Review of Books*

"The most civilized critical prose now going."—MARK SCHORER $4.95

PHILIP RAHV

THE MYTH AND THE POWERHOUSE

A founding editor of *Partisan Review* comments on the extravagant "sexology" of some of the latest American fiction . . . on Saul Bellow's progress as a novelist . . . on the enthusiasms and aberrations of Norman Mailer . . . and the writings of Dostoevsky, Gogol, Chekhov, Eliot, and Hemingway. $4.95

EDMUND WILSON

THE BIT BETWEEN MY TEETH

A Literary Chronicle of 1950-65

Continuing his chronicle of the literary world in America and Europe, begun in his two earlier volumes, THE SHORES OF LIGHT (the 20's and 30's) and CLASSICS AND COMMERCIALS (the 40's). $7.50. *All three volumes, boxed, are available at $18.50.*

MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV

MOSCOW SUMMER

A graphic portrait of Soviet life today—literary and cultural life in particular—by a Yugoslav intellectual who went to the U.S.S.R. as an exchange scholar. Mihajlov's observations, according to C. L. Sulzberger in *The New York Times,* "are among the most startling heard inside the Communist orbit for two generations." Foreword by MYRON KOLATCH. *A Farrar, Straus & Giroux/New Leader Book.* $4.50

Now at your bookstore

FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED